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WE READ YOUR MAIL

LORD OF THE KINGS

Thanks for your *Kings of Metal* issue. I liked the longer-version articles that you ran, and I loved the mini-features that you had with each article—especially the quizzes. Usually I feel I read **Hit Parader** to be entertained and to gain a little insight into my favorite bands. But in that issue I actually learned some things... and I liked it!

Sam
Tampa, FL

That Axl Rose is really a piece of work, isn't he? I had never read a complete interview with him (I know he's not exactly the most talkative guy on the planet), so even if the one you printed in *The Kings of Metal* was kind of old, it was still really fascinating. I can't imagine what's really going through his head, and having an extra ten years of virtual inactivity through which to filter his remarks makes his words that much more revealing.

Tom
Sacramento, CA

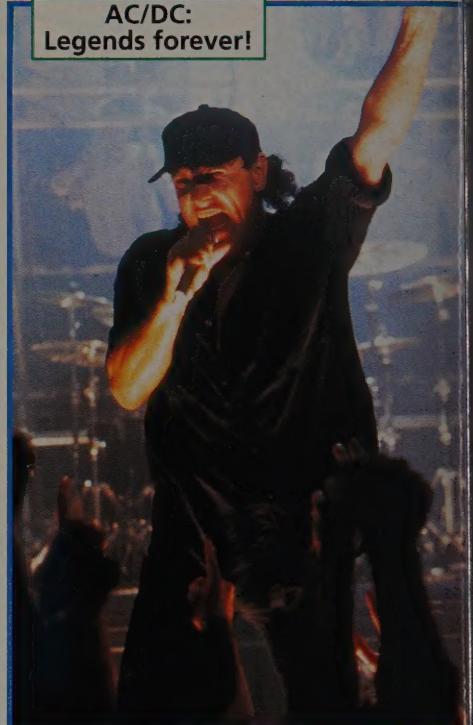
I thought your *Kings of Metal* issue rocked. But how come you only gave Slayer one lousy photo when everyone knows that they ARE the true Kings? Maiden, Priest, Kiss and Metallica all certainly deserve whatever credit you may wish to bestow upon them. But you can't call a magazine *The Kings of Metal* and then put in bands like Guns N' Roses and Aerosmith while leaving Slayer in the dust.

Peter
Babylon, NY

Isn't it interesting that among your "kings of metal" quite a few of them—most notably Judas Priest, Black Sabbath, Motley Crue and Slipknot—are quite active in 2005. Is that a mere coincidence? I think not! What it tells me is that classic metal, as well as the bands that play it, are forces that can survive trends and fashions in music. They are timeless.

Valerie
Pittsburgh, PA

AC/DC:
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KNOT MANIA

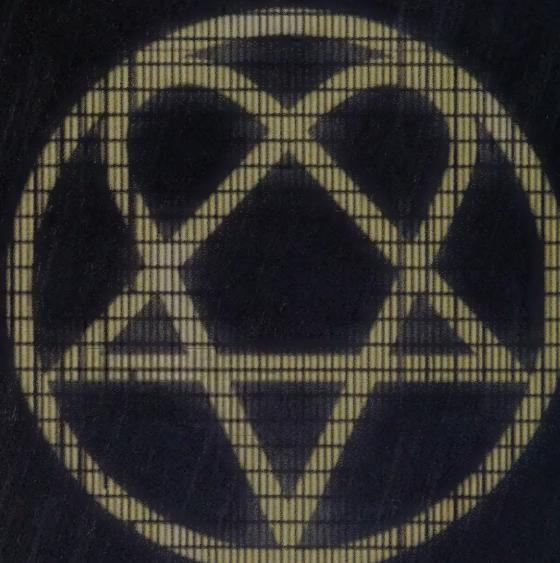
Having just seen Slipknot for the first time as part of the *Subliminal Verses Tour*, I now understand what all the "hype" is about. To be honest, when I heard their albums, I never got particularly excited. To my ears it sounded like post-industrial metallic filler. There was nothing particularly distinctive about it. But on stage, with their shared artistic vision blending with the intensity of their sound, the "magic" of the Knot truly comes alive.

Leo
Palm Beach, FL

I'm really getting tired of some of the back-handed swipes that a lot of people in the media keep taking at Slipknot. Just because this is a band that thrives on intensity and creativity, some of the more "sedate" members of the press seem to think that they have no talent. That's certainly true in the local reviews I've read of their recent tour. All the critic would say is how "loud" they played. Hey dude, this is rock and roll... wake up! Thank goodness for magazines like **Hit Parader** that truly seem to understand the Knot.

Benjamin
Houston, TX

I don't like "gimmick" rock. I never have, and I never will. Slipknot is the gimmick metal band of the 21st Century... just as Kiss was the gimmick band of the '70s,



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YOUNG BLOOD

I've been a heavy metal fan for nearly ten years. I've filled in my album collection with all the "classics" by Sabbath, Zeppelin and Kiss. But I am very proud to be a fan of today's generation of heavy bands. Groups like Trivium, Killswitch Engage and As I Lay Dying are taking the metal form to the next level.

Chad
Nashville, TN

I want to contribute to the "old vs. new" debate in metal. One of the great things about heavy

Twisted Sister was in the '80s and Marilyn Manson was in the '90s. That doesn't mean that Slipknot are any better or worse than those other groups. All it means is that they have a lot in common.

B.K.
Atlanta, GA

metal is that it isn't a disposable musical form like pop or rap. It has a sense of history, and that history is celebrated by fans around the world. Fans who choose to ignore the contributions made by the style's Founding Fathers are not only cheating themselves, they're doing those bands a major disservice.

Mary
Columbus, OH

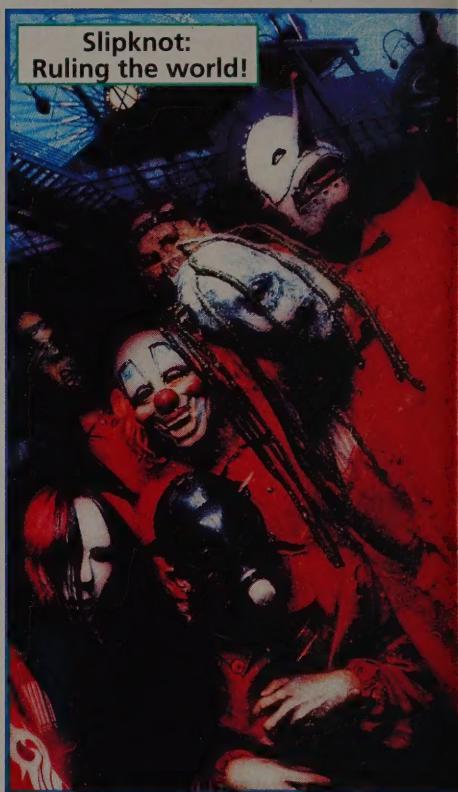
Nobody asked me, but my favorite new band is Seether. I think those guys write some amazing songs, and they can really rock on stage. And, better yet, their lead guy is dating Amy Lee from Evanescence, which makes him a really cool guy.

Beth
Hoboken, NJ

Isn't it interesting that a lot of today's most successful hard rock acts seem to be mired in ideas and formulas as old as rock and roll itself? Where would bands like Jet, the Darkness and Mastodon be without the influence of the Beatles, AC/DC and Black Sabbath? I think it's strange that so many bands can't come up with anything original to write or play.

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7. JOSH LEPPARD (Coheed & Cambria)

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CAUGHT IN THE ACT

QUEENSRYCHE

BY DAMON
LANCASTER

After nearly 25 years in the rock and roll biz, Queensryche have proven they can still do it all. Whether it's been headlining their own theater shows—during which they've performed their classic '80s rock "opera" **Operation:mindcrime** in its entirety—or serving as the "special guests" on Judas Priest's current arena-filling road venture, these legendary Seattle natives have continually reveled in the inherent diversity of their approach. Indeed, for vocalist Geoff Tate, guitarist Michael Wilton, drummer Scott Rockenfield, bassist Eddie Jackson and touring guitarist Mike Stone, their recent run of on-the-road good fortune has seemingly cast these progressive metal masters into a spotlight they haven't enjoyed in well over a decade.

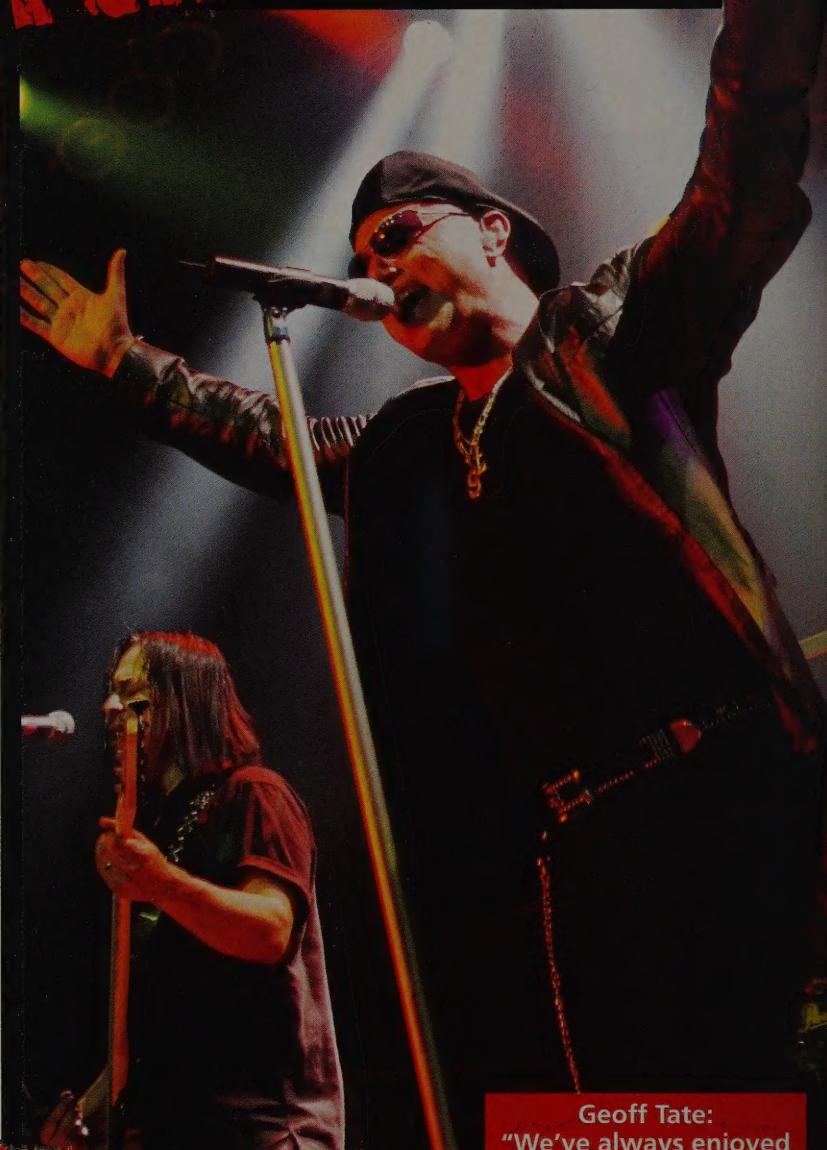
"This tour, and the continued loyalty of our fans, proves something that we've always suspected—that Queensryche's music is timeless," Tate said. "We've always enjoyed pushing the limits both on album and on stage, and the last year has allowed us a number of interesting opportunities to do just that."

It is true that Queensryche have poured incredible amounts of time, energy and money into turning their latest road excursion into a true show biz extravaganza—one of the most completely overwhelming sight and sound spectacles ever to hit the concert stage. Drawing on a team of computer engineers, video pioneers and staging visionaries, the Ryche have created a stage show that in complexity and design ranks among rock and roll's crowning achievements. Drawing on music created throughout the group's lengthy career—but providing a special place for the intricacies of **Mindcrime**—the live presentation takes the audience on a non-stop thrill ride through Queensryche's musical history, presenting a detailed look at the material that has made this unit platinum-covered stars around the world.

"We felt that we wanted to make sure that this show was different from not only anything we had done before—but different from what *anyone* had done before," Tate explained. "When we put the whole show together, we wanted the songs to give a complete overview of our career from start to finish. It was really exciting for us to do, and I think it's just as exciting for the fans to experience."

Starting out with *Queen Of The Ryche* from their debut EP, and moving swiftly through their early material, it's not until the band reaches their landmark disc, **Operation:mindcrime** that the show fully hits its stride. With video screens presenting fast-paced images that correspond to the album's complex story line, Queensryche utilize **Mindcrime** as the centerpiece of their concert presentation much like the Who utilized their groundbreaking rock "opera" *Tommy*, as the structural foundation of their live shows three decades earlier. But this is the 21st Century, and every trick of modern technology

"This tour proves that Queensryche music is timeless."



Geoff Tate:
"We've always enjoyed pushing the limits."

is pulled out to bring the band's songs to life—adding new depth and strength to material already intimately familiar to the band's loyal supporters.

"An album like **Mindcrime** always had a very strong theatrical element to it," Tate explained. "We had never been able to present it the way we wanted because we never had the time or the money to do it. We knew all along that we wanted to stage this show in theaters, and make sure that everyone was able to see and hear everything that was going on."

Despite so much focus being placed upon **Mindcrime**, the band managed the difficult task of keeping the well-paced and perfectly performed set from peaking too early. While most bands build their shows so that their best known and most popular songs come at the end, Queensryche decided to throw such standard practices to the wind, following their chronological growth pattern to its logical conclusion. As the theater erupted in an array of video and lighting effects the band tore into a selection of their best known songs, a fitting conclusion for a night most fans will remember for a long time to come.

"We just wanted to make sure that we gave the fans a value for their money," Tate said. "I think most of them have grown to expect something different from Queensryche—something special. I feel that's exactly what we've given them this time."

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BAND ON THE RISE!

SHOOTING STARS

BY SAM HATCHER



DIRTY AMERICANS

"We have supreme confidence in ourselves and in the music we make."

Sometimes it seems as if everything old is new again in the world of rock and roll. Whether it's the Darkness tapping into the AC/DC-meets-Queen musical pipeline, Jet channeling the Beatles and Stones, or Silvertide trying to act like the illegitimate offspring of Aerosmith, it certainly appears as if the halcyon days of the rock empire are serving to inspire a new generation of guitar-toting bands. Of course, there are many who will argue that "classic" hard rock sounds and styles have never gone out of style, that rugged guitar riffs, painfully screamed vocals and songs dealing with gettin' paid and gettin' laid are as vital today as they were in the '70s, '80s or '90s. The Detroit based band, the Dirty Americans, will certainly second that notion.

The fact is that vocalist Myron, guitarist Jeff Piper, bassist Pete Bever and drummer Jeremiah Pilbeam seem totally immersed in the straight-forward sounds, no-nonsense attitudes and pseudo-hippie philosophies that so characterized hard rock during its formative years. But don't think for one second that the songs featured on their new disc, **Strange Generation**, are some sort of pure retro musical trip. Sure, these guys tip their hat a time or two to influences ranging from the MC5 and Grand Funk Railroad to Blue Oyster Cult and Cheap Trick. But they do it all with their feet

firmly planted in 21st Century musical ideals.

"If people look at this as just a band playing '70s music, they're missing the point," Piper said. "We're a band that plays great rock and roll music, pure and simple. If it sounds a little like things that were played back then, it's a natural development for us. We're not paying homage to a time in rock history. We're paying homage to rock and roll itself."

When you consider how long it's taken the Dirty Americans to release **Strange Generation**, you might get the impression that they actually started out back in the '70s. Indeed, this disc was first conceived and recorded back in 2003...

the 13 songs that made it onto the album. It was released in Europe in 2004 and got some great reviews. We were invited to play a lot of those great European rock festivals, where we shared the bill with everyone from Metallica to Motorhead to the Darkness. The crowds were great to us. But now that the album is finally out in America, we want to make the most of it."

The way this quartet plan on making the most of their hard-won opportunity is by hitting the tour trail and playing anywhere, and with anyone that'll have them. They've already hit the road throughout the Midwest with the likes

"We're a band that spends a lot of time crafting our songs."

yet it's first seeing the light of day in North America in 2005. What took so long? Why did it take an indie State-side label two years to realize the commercial potential housed within this band's sonic, six-string-driven attack? For their part, the members of the Dirty Americans seem rather non-pulsed by it all. They've been keeping busy, and now that their disc is *finally* out on American shores, they aim to capitalize on any opportunity it brings forth.

"We actually started writing this album and recording it late in 2002," Piper said. "We recorded 50 songs—all the things we had written and were playing live—and then started narrowing it down until we ended up with

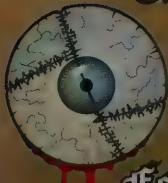
of Alice Cooper, Seether and Poison, and they plan on staying out there until they can begin to expand their realm of influence. Piper and his boys know that they're fighting an uphill battle, but they believe that the unmistakable rock vitality that fills such tracks as *No Rest*, *Burn You Down* and *Control* will eventually win over the world-wide audience they crave.

"Everywhere we've gone people love rock and roll," Piper said. "That's something we've already found out. Whether it's been in England, Japan or the U.S.A., this music speaks to everyone."

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dredg

DREDG
DIGGING THINGS UP

Dredg is a band that has staked its reputation on its ability to be startlingly different from anyone else in the hard rock world. Yet at the same time, Dredg is a band determined to produce a sound with a wide-ranging appeal. It's a difficult balance, to be sure, but one that vocalist/guitarist Gavin Hayes, guitarist Mark Engles, bassist Drew Roulette and drummer/pianist Dino Campanella have managed to attain time and time again throughout Dredg's latest release, **catch without arms**. With their penchant for combining distinctly heavy rock passages with a veritable kitchen's sink variety of other musical ingredients, this Northern California unit has managed to create a vibrant, totally unpredictable and utterly unique rock and roll soundscape. Mixing Sepultura-like tribal rhythms with Pink Floyd-inspired "head rock" and even a few jazz-tinged percussive beats, what Dredg emerge with is a style that, quite simply, stands alone and apart.

"I think it's very safe to say that we don't fit in a box when it comes to our music," Hayes explained. "We don't like it when every song on an album sounds the same—same guitar tone, same drum sound, same lyrical attitude. It starts to seem like you're hearing the identical song over and over again. That just isn't what we're trying to do. By no means do we ever want to make a 'standard' album."

If Dredg's fear was that their disc would fall into the same cookie-cutter, ready-made-for-MTV package that seems to hang like a malaise over much of today's rock culture, this quartet has little reason for concern. In both style and scope this is radical stuff, with songs like *ode to the sun*, *bug eyes* and *planting seeds* pulling out all of the proverbial stops in their quest for uniqueness. With celestial sound effects battling with European-style chants and wall-shaking guitar chords for center stage, it is virtually impossible to properly describe the unit's sound... let

alone categorize it. With **catch without arms** Dredg have unquestionably created one of the more unusual and compelling rock showcases of the year.

"In some ways our songs are like abstract paintings," Campanella said. "There's a great deal going on, and a great deal of it is left open to the interpretive powers of those who hear it. But at its core the music still features strong melodies and interesting lyrics. We just take everything else from that starting point."

For Dredg their musical starting point can be traced back a full decade to the small No Cal town of Los Gatos. It was there, in the outskirts of the notorious Silicon Valley, that the future members of Dredg began to assimilate their highly eclectic array

of musical tastes and influences. Slowly, these like-minded musicians found themselves being drawn together with a common purpose—to create a sound that reflected their interests and intent. They began with a metallic foundation, one based on heavy guitars and pulsating rhythms. That style was best reflected on their first disc, the independently-released 1997 effort **Orph**. By 1999 the group's sound had undergone a major evolutionary step, a fact evidenced on their next album, 1999's **Leifmotif**. But it wasn't until they gained the full support of a major label that the group's true musical vision came to light on 2003's **El Cielo**. And now with the immediate critical and commercial acclaim heaped upon **catch without arms**, it seems as if the members of Dredg are prepared to carry the contemporary music world on a ride they perhaps never expected to take.

"We've been very encouraged by the kind of support we've received," Hayes said. "Whether it's fans who've designed their own web pages for us, or the record label, the fact that we know we're reaching people with what we're doing is incredibly rewarding."

"It's clear that we don't fit in a box when it comes to our music."



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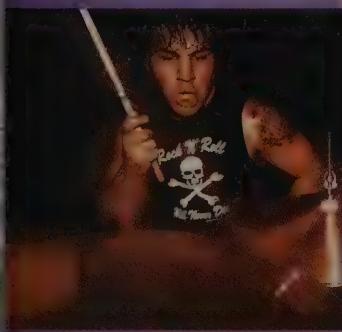
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They Said It

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"There's not really that much about me that isn't out there for people to see or hear in my lyrics. Most of the things I am, or that I believe tend to come out in what I write. Other than that, maybe the most interesting thing about my personal life is that I'm very happy at the moment. I've been totally sober for over seven years, and that is something I'm very proud of."

JONATHAN DAVIS, KORN

"We're just doin' what we do. We're not trying to fit in or teach anyone any rock and roll lessons. What you have here are five guys who really enjoy playing together and who really enjoy making some kick-ass rock and roll music."

SLASH, VELVET REVOLVER

"When I'm home for too long, I want to get on the road. When I'm on the road for too long, I want to go home. I've always been that way, and now it's probably worse than ever. But when I'm home I don't really have the chance to relax that much. I'm either in the studio recording, or rehearsing for a tour, or working out, or doing something else."

OZZY OSBOURNE

"You can't ask for respect, you've got to earn it. Maybe that's what we're most proud of. When we've been on the road we've had so many other bands come up to us and tell us how much they liked our music and how much they respected what we were doing. If that doesn't make you stop and think, then nothing does. You can't get a higher compliment than that!"

SERGE TANKIAN,
SYSTEM OF A DOWN

"There always needs to be growth in music. But that doesn't mean that some of the great stuff from the past still doesn't have a place today. I still draw upon influences like the Beatles and Black Sabbath."

MARILYN MANSON

"We like it when people tell us what we can't do and shouldn't do. That's always brought out the best in us. Right now, I don't know if we've ever been more focused and together in terms of what we want to do as a band. We have so much aggression and hostility in our systems, that we can't wait to let them explode in our music."

COREY TAYLOR, SLIPKNOT

"We're all mature men who realize that there are some things that mean more than petty grievances—and celebrating the history and music of Judas Priest is clearly one of them."

GLENN TIPTON, JUDAS PRIEST



"We don't believe in limiting ourselves or over-categorizing our music. We're proud to be called a heavy metal band, but why should that limit what we can do musically?"

DAVID DRAIMAN, DISTURBED

"One of the things we've always been very proud of is our ability to be true to what we believe. We've never gotten caught up in trends or anything like that. We have the ability to stay in touch with what's happening while maintaining a blind eye to that direct influence."

LARS ULRICH, METALLICA

"From the very beginning, we had conceptualized a lot of the things we wanted to do, and now—thanks to the success of our previous albums and the support both the record label and the fans have given us—we can begin turning those conceptual fantasies into reality. They're all part of Mudvayne's creative universe, it's our own little world."

CHAD GREY, MUDVAYNE



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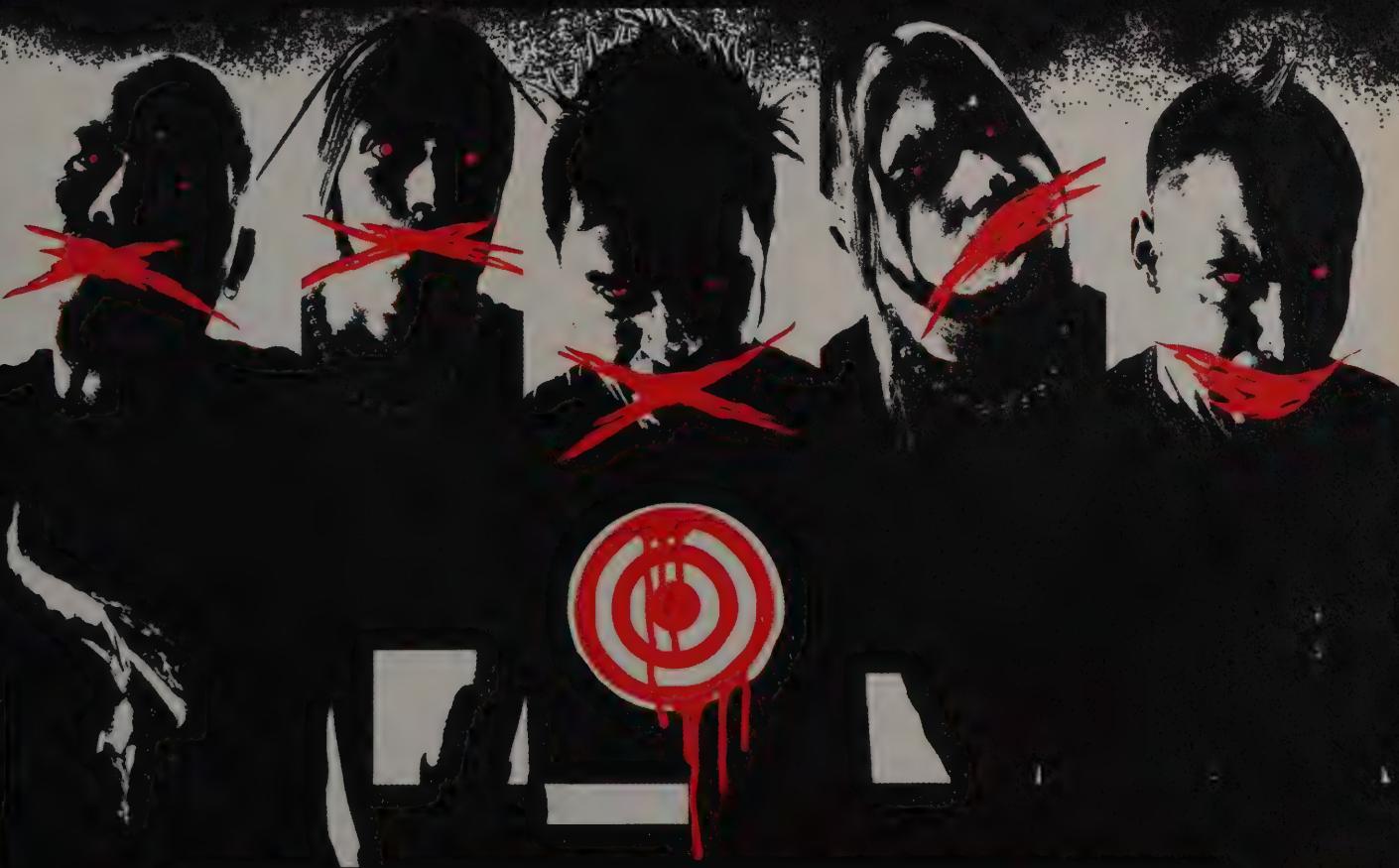
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COLLISION COURSE

HP Reviews The Latest CDs, DVDs & Anything else we darn well please!

rating system: ***** awesome **** slammin' *** smokin' ** lame * trash

This month we begin something new. We've asked two of our most musically savvy staffers Andy & Amy (who, by the way, have radically different rock and roll tastes) to listen to this month's top album releases and offer their insightful—though often misguided—opinions. We call this exercise in musical futility *Collision Course*.

TEAM SLEEP, TEAM SLEEP

Chino Moreno has made his mark (and quite a significant one, at that) as the frontman for the Deftones, one of the most intense—and successful—of metal's current generation. But apparently the success of the 'Tones hasn't been enough to completely satisfy Mr. Moreno's artistic soul... which is where Team Sleep comes into play. This unit has been Moreno's long-rumored side-project, a band that takes a diametrically opposite synth/snooze rock angle when compared to the Deftones' straight-ahead metallic passions. Clearly this will be an acquired taste—even for those who will instantly "love" everything Moreno does merely on the strength of his reputation.

RATING: ***

I've gotta admit that I'm a sucker for the Deftones. They can do no wrong in my book, and while I'd probably prefer to have Chino working on new music with "the boys" than fooling around with Team Sleep, if this helps get him through the night, then I'm all for it. That doesn't mean that I particularly like this brand of progressive music, but if it makes Chino happy, then I'm happy too.

RATING: ****



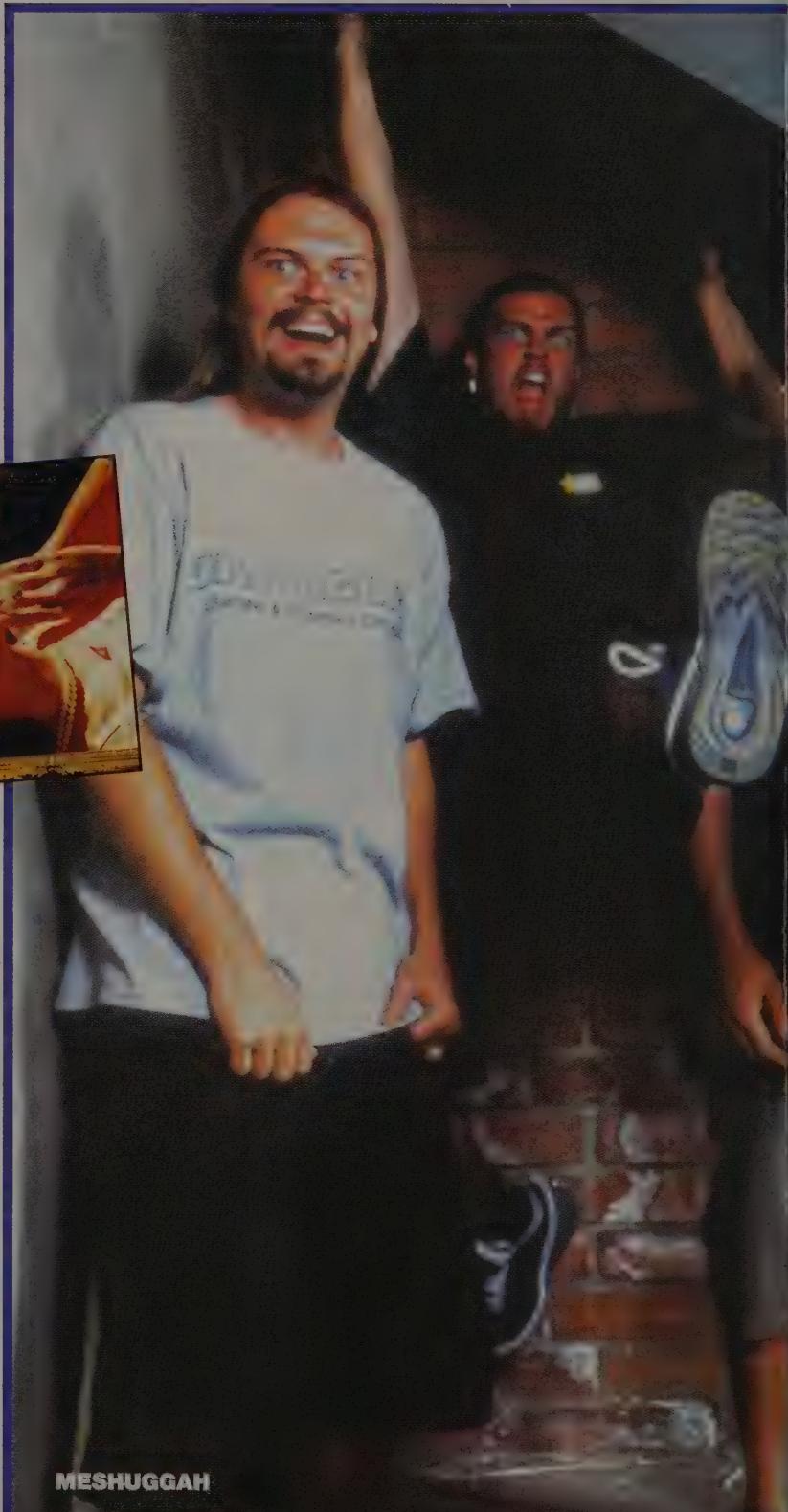
MESHUGGAH,

CATCH 33

What happens when you create a 47 minute-long metal opus and then divide it into 13 parts? You probably end up with something akin to Meshuggah's latest, **Catch 33**. Certainly, this is an ambitious undertaking (picking up where this Scandinavian "dark metal" unit left off with their single-song 2004 EP, *1*), but at times it becomes impossible to know where one musical movement stops and the next begins. But perhaps that is the whole point of this disc. At times—especially when Meshuggah's two-guitar lineup take their foot off the metal pedal just a little bit—this music takes on an almost operatic grandeur—but when things are cranked back up to "11", this is guaranteed merely to annoy your neighbors to the max. But again, perhaps that's the point!

RATING: ****

Two years ago Meshuggah were the "it" band of the metal moment. Everyone from national publications to Jack



MESHUGGAH

Osbourne proclaimed them to be among the best bands on earth. But somewhere along the line, a little of the polish has seemingly eroded from this band's metallic crown. Their latest **Catch 33** is so intense, and so impenetrable, that at times it becomes nearly impossible to forge ahead. Indeed, dealing with this one-song "monster" is like trying to paddle a canoe into the eye of a hurricane—it's a lot of work, and when you finally get there you invariably wonder if the sojourn was worth the effort.

RATING: ***



The Indies

BY AMY SCIARRETTO

OCTAVIA SPERATI

Winter Enclosure

(Candlelight)

Octavia Sperati's Winter Enclosure is decidedly European metal. Goth textures, progressive songwriting, songs that hover near and above the five-minute mark, an overall melancholic mood, and lush, dramatic female vocals are the order of the day on almost every note of *Winter Enclosure*. Like Drain STH (does anyone at home keeping score even remember them?), Octavia Sperati is an all-female ensemble that's easy on the eyes and the ears. Go with *Lifelines Of Depths*, *Icebound*, and *Below Zero*. If you like depressing Eurocore, then this is all you.

FOR FANS OF: Lacuna Coil, Gathering,

Nightwish, Paradise Lost

RATING: **

A LIFE ONCE LOST

Hunter

(Ferret)

With only one listen to A Life Once Lost's Hunter, you will feel like a vulnerable prey, limping, bleeding, and running through the jungle with a bloodthirsty predator hot on your scent. Hunter

blazes with a fiery human intensity, and here, the Philadelphia five piece have shed the "Meshuggah, Jr." tag that plagued their last album, *A Great Artist*. This is where ALOL find their identity. Hunter doesn't stop to take a breath, or to let its hunted prey/listeners catch their breath, either. We suggest *Vulture*, *Rehash*, and *Needleman*. And when you're done with those songs, we suggest you down a gallon of Gatorade because this one will zap all your energy. Nice work, gentlemen.

FOR FANS OF: Meshuggah, Lamb Of God,

Dillinger Escape Plan

RATING: ***

SOILENT GREEN

Confrontation

(Relapse)

New Orleans, LA sludge rockers Soilent Green are regularly namechecked by Pantera/Superjoint Ritual/super metal fan Philip Anselmo. If one of metal's most influential front-men pays his respect to Soilent Green, then don't you think you should, as well? Soilent Green were birthed from the sweaty,



humid swamps of the bayou, and their music has similar qualities. It's thick, and it clings to you like latex in August. Confrontation is dirty, crusty Southern rock—music critics call it NOLA rock, for New Orleans, LA—that's got the grooves of Pantera/Superjoint Ritual and the ferocity of Acid Bath. Our faves are *Forgive And Regret*, *Leaves Of Three*, and *Southern Spirit Suite*. Confrontation: a true triumph of underground rock.

FOR FANS OF: Acid Bath, Superjoint Ritual

RATING: ***

THROWDOWN

Vendetta

(Trustkill)

Orange County straight edge (that means no drugs, no drink) band Throwdown have built a name for themselves thanks to their chugga, chugga, violent riffs and intimidatingly barked vocals. Their latest, *Vendetta*, pulls back from the jud-jud thuggery and the band focuses on stronger songwriting and more technical riffing, and after several listens to *Vendetta*, we at *Hit Parader*, as longtime fans, have concluded that this TxDx's best effort. While the album shows artistic progress and growth, Throwdown still know how to design the kind of potent, tougher-than-a-motorcycle-gang breakdowns that cause carnage in moshpits. Pit picks: *We Will Rise*, *Burn*, *Speak The Truth*, and *Discipline*. Again, nice work, lads.

FOR FANS OF: Hatebreed, Terror, Chimaira

RATING: ***

BIOHAZARD

Means To An End

(SPV)

If there was a nuclear holocaust, we'd wager that the only things to survive would be sewer rats and Brooklyn's Biohazard. This crew has never given up and never given in, even though they've been faced with the odd situation of making their best album *very early* in their career with 1992's *Urban Discipline*. When you make such a quality album so early, the constant dilemma is trying to live up to it. *Means To An End* is a quality metal album, and it's exactly what you'd expect from Biohazard in 2005, and not much more. Urban grooves, mosh parts, and the vocal tandem of bassist, and former *Oz* inmate Evan Seinfeld, and guitarist Billy Graziadei popu-



The Indies

late Means To An End. Diehard Biohazard fans will noth on this, but it's doubtful that they'll make any new fans with it, either.

FOR FANS OF: Hatebreed, Sick Of It All, Pro-Pain
RATING: **

BIG BUSINESS *Head For The Shallow* (Hydrahead)

Big Business are a two-person team that craft songs that sound like they were created by an entire orchestra. Head For The Shallow isn't orchestral or sprawling, but it is very busy, distorted, disjointed rock and roll. Head For The Shallow is the kind of garagey album that will not only make your parents ask you to turn it down, but they'll ask you to turn it off and never play it again. Big Business definitely work your nerves, but we think that's their intention. It's a sick, twisted game, but somebody's got to do it. If you like hip, art rock, then may we suggest OG, Focus Pocus, and Stareadactyl.

FOR FANS OF: various Mike Patton side projects
RATING: ***

CANDLEMASS *Candlemass* (Nuclear Blast)

It's fitting that Candlemass have issued a self-titled album. The classic lineup of Candlemass has reconvened here, but it's hardly as doomy as any of their past efforts. To *Hit Parader's* ears, Candlemass actually sounds much more straightforward than anything they've ever done. But by underground metal standards, this kind of straightforward approach is still left of center, especially when compared to mainstream rock. Candlemass is decent, and worth a gander, but it's not going to be the one they are remembered for.

FOR FANS OF: Cathedral, Paradise Lost
RATING: **

CLUTCH *Robot Hive/Exodus* (DRT)

If West Virginia-by-way-of-Maryland band Clutch released an album every year, we at *Hit Parader* would be very happy. Why? Because when we get jaded by the influx of

corporate, uninspired, sounds-like-everything-else-out-there rock, Clutch come along with a new album that reminds us of everything that's good and pure about rock and roll. Robot Hive/Exodus follows up last year's fantastic Blast Tyrant, and it's a bluesy, soulful, funkified rock affair. Neil Fallon's vitriolic, talk-sing style is anchored by the standout, jammy riffs of guitarist Tim Sult. Props to Clutch for referencing REO Speedwagon and Dokken, all in the space of the first song, "The Incomparable Mr. Flannery." Thank you, Clutch, for continuing to rock our world to its very core. We'd be lost without you.

FOR FANS OF: Corrosion Of Conformity, Soil, Black Sabbath
RATING: ***

PELICAN *March Into The Sea* (Hydrahead)

You're probably starting to think that we at *Hit Parader* are masochists. Why? Because we tend to listen to, and like, artsy, mathematical, instrumental rock, like Pelican. March Into The Sea, a two-song EP, the first of which is almost 21 minutes long, isn't an easily digestible listen. It's a knotted, twisted, denser-than-dense web of sound, with a dark, foreboding, and ominous vibe throughout. These black-hued moments are often punctuated by shimmering, layered, unexpected interludes, as well. One thing is for sure; we're looking forward to the next full-length. Art rock never sounded so good.

FOR FANS OF: Tusk, Isis, Old Man Gloom
RATING: ***

Candlemass

EVERGREEN TERRACE *Sincerity Is An Easy Disguise In This Business* (Eulogy)

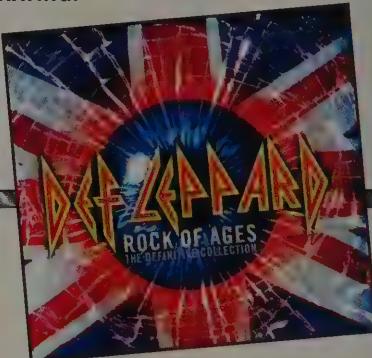
Put on your moshing shoes, because Evergreen Terrace have arrived. Evergreen Terrace, who take their clever name from the street that the Simpsons live on, are caught in a mosh. Sincerity Is An Easy Disguise In This Business mixes full-on brute force with some clean, melodic vocals, like many a metalcore band. While that convention has become trite and tired, we still like ET for their mesmerizing moshability. Instead of playing air guitar to songs like *Dogfight* and *New Friend Request*, you can "air mosh."

FOR FANS OF: Throwdown, Bleeding Through, Killswitch Engage
RATING: ***

DEF LEPPARD, *ROCK OF AGES*

For some more recent converts to the hard rock scene, it may be a little hard to believe that for half-a-decade back in the mid-'80s, Def Leppard was the most popular band in the world. Their discs sold tens-of-millions of copies and their tours were instant sell-outs from Boston to Bangkok. And while these English Aces are still alive and well, their legacy hasn't survived quite as well as say, the like of Iron Maiden or even Bon Jovi. But listening to their collected work on the two-disc "greatest hits" set *Rock of Ages* quickly reveals exactly why the Leps were so popular; quite simply they could do it all! They were heavy, they were melodic and they wrote songs that stuck to your ribs like tarpaper. Whether you're a long time fan who has worn out their copy of *Pyromania* and *Hysteria*, or someone just getting into the music scene, this is a definitive collection that stands as a time capsule for one of hard rock's greatest eras.

RATING: ****



Def Leppard? C'mon... get serious! Can there be a more un-cool bands in the rich annals of hard rock than these poseurs? My older sister used to love them—about 20 years ago! Oh well, I guess one of the reasons that hard rock is so popular is that it's one of the few contemporary music forms with a sense of history, and the fact of the matter is that some of this stuff still sounds pretty good. I even hate to admit it, but songs like *Pour Some Sugar On Me* and *Photograph* are things I've played air guitar to for years!

RATING: ***

GIZMACHI, *THE IMBUING*

WOW! Gazmachi is one intense band!! The discovery of none other than Slipknot's own Shawn "Clown" Crahan (and the first signing to his Big Orange Clown Records), it's easy to understand why this New York State unit appealed to Clown in the first place. Their rugged blend of hardcore, metal and punk influences place them in the same branch of the metal family tree as Slipknot—though in look, manner and execution they are a far cry from the Knot's brand of

DEF LEPPARD



sonic intensity. While it is unlikely that Gizmachi's brand of metallic mayhem will find a wide-spread commercial audience, songs such as *The Answer* should invariably find a home in the hearts of headbangers everywhere.

RATING: ****

I admit that I tend to like things that are a little more "listenable" than Gizmachi's *The Imbuing*. But, all things considered, I enjoyed this album more than I thought I would. I was able to see this band open for Slipknot on *The Subliminal Verses Tour* (right before *all* the opening acts were dropped) and I thought they were one of the better young bands on the bill.

RATING: ***

SEETHER, *KARMA & EFFECT*

Seether has rather quickly developed a reputation as one of those bands that can deliver monster-sized hits, without sacrificing one iota of their artistic integrity. That's a very valuable skill to possess in these unpredictable rock and roll times, and this South African unit once again successfully walk that potentially fine line on their latest release, *Karma & Effect*. Smoothly blending radio-ready hits with

progressive, trend-bending soundscapes, the Seether boys manage to produce one of the most continually satisfying discs of the year. With a style that conveniently borrows from bands ranging as wide as the Beatles and Black Sabbath, Seether somehow manage to create a sound all their own.

RATING: ****



Seether is one of those "it" bands. They scored a big hit last year with *Broken*, where main-man Shaun Morgan performed a duet with his "squeeze", Evanescence's Amy Lee. Thankfully, the band's new album, *Karma & Effect*, isn't 12 versions of *Broken*. In fact, I've gotta applaud these guys for taking some real chances here. This album rocks!

RATING: *****

Quick Reviews

Past Reviews At A Glance

**NINE INCH
NAILS,
WITH TEETH**
RATING: *****

**SYSTEM OF A
DOWN,
HYPNOTIZE**
RATING: ***

**WEDNESDAY 13,
TRANSYLVANIA
90210**
RATING: ***

**JOE PERRY,
JOE PERRY**
RATING: ***

**SUPAGROUP,
RULES**
RATING: ***

**JUDAS PRIEST,
ANGEL OF RET-
RIBUTION**
RATING: ***

**MUDVAYNE,
LOST AND
FOUND**
RATING: ***

**OZZY
OSBOURNE,
PRINCE OF
DARKNESS**
RATING: ***

**MOTLEY CRUE,
RED, WHITE &
CRUE**
RATING: *****

**BLACK LABEL
SOCIETY,
MAFIA**
RATING: ***

**RAMMSTEIN,
REISE, REISE**
RATING: ***

**SHADOWS FALL,
THE WAR WITHIN**
RATING: ***

**A PERFECT
CIRCLE,
eMOTIVE**
RATING: *****

**CHEVELLE,
THIS TYPE OF
THINKING
(COULD
DO US IN)**
RATING: ***



HEAVY METAL RAPPINGS

AUDIOSLAVE: Guitarist Tom Morello admits that expanding Audioslave's on-stage repertoire to include hits by Rage Against the Machine and Soundgarden (the bands that Audioslave's members were previously in) has been an exciting change for this platinum-covered unit. "It was hard for us to believe how easily we picked up playing *Spoonman*, and how well Chris (Cornell) interpreted *Killing In the Name Of*. It was a very organic, natural process. If it hadn't been we would never have pursued the idea. It's been something we've enjoyed doing, and apparently the fans have enjoyed it as well."

SLIPKNOT: After all their success—including the platinum certification of their most recent collection, *Vol. 3: The Subliminal Verses*—the members of Slipknot still have major issues with the manner in which they're perceived by those not intimately attuned to the workings of this nine-man metallic strike force. "It's really a shame that so many people still get caught up in the way we look and don't try to get beyond that," said vocalist Corey Taylor. "To them, we're just a novelty act, and they refuse to see the artistry and imagination that's at the core of what we do."

BLACK SABBATH: Keep an eye out for a possible Black Sabbath in-concert DVD that will feature highlights of the legendary unit's *Ozzfest 2005* performances. According to guitarist Tony Iommi, plans are afoot to record a number of shows, but the actual release date of the DVD is still very much a secret. "I think a lot will depend on how much everyone likes what they see once we view the tapes," he said. "But if everything goes according to plan, I'd imagine that it could come out in the fall. That would be quite exciting."

Slipknot: Just a novelty act?



Chris Cornell: Singing both old hits and new faves.

A movie poster for the film "Ten Thousand Fists". It features a large, stylized fist in the foreground, set against a red background. The fist is grey and has a star-like shape in the center. Below the fist, the title "TEN THOUSAND FISTS" is written in white, along with the website "disturbed1.com". To the right of the fist, the release date "SEPTEMBER 20" is displayed. The overall design is gritty and dramatic.

NINE INCH NAILS: It's interesting to note that after years of carefully guarding his private life like it was a State Secret, Nine Inch Nails' legendary Trent Reznor has recently opened up about his past addiction problems. Perhaps the fact that the rock and roll Renaissance Man has now seemingly overcome all of these life hurdles has empowered him to step forward and discuss the situation more openly—which has not-so-ironically served to focus even more interest on NIN's latest collection, *With Teeth*. "There was a point where I started to believe what people were saying about me," he said. "That can be dangerous. It led me down a dangerous path."

MANSON: One of the most amusing tales that passed across our editorial desk recently involved Marilyn Manson and none other than Janet Jackson—the boob-bearing sister of you-know who. Apparently the pair found themselves attending the album release party for Jackson's most recent album. But upon seeing Manson, Janet apparently flipped out, believing that the highly theatrical rocker was nothing short of the Devil himself. "She was totally terrified of him," said an on-the-scene observer. "She didn't know how to react to him."

THE HOTTEST NEWS... THE HOTTEST NEWS... THE HOTTEST NEWS...

SYSTEM OF A DOWN: System of a Down's guitarist/songwriter Daron Malakian admits to being "pleasantly surprised" by the degree of critical and commercial praise heaped upon his band's latest set, *Mezmerize*. "It doesn't matter how much success you may have had in the past," he said. "Each time a new album comes out it's a totally different experience. You can have all the confidence in the world in what you have created, but you just don't know for sure how others will react to it. That's why having people respond to this music the way they have has been a great relief for all of us."

AC/DC: According to the legendary Angus Young, AC/DC has written and recorded so much material over the last year that they might seriously consider making their next album release a double disc. "We do have a lot of songs at the moment," the pint-size guitar demon said. "But that's not incredibly unusual for us. We tend to have a lot of material at some point in the recording process, then begin to whittle it down. But this time, we like a lot of what we're hearing, so the idea of expanding things out is not out of the realm of possibility."

LINKIN PARK: Linkin Park have gone to battle with their record label and it's not clear at the moment how all this off-stage action will impact the band's upcoming recording schedule. Citing concerns over the label's ability to properly promote their future endeavors, the band has expressed interest in parting ways with their long-standing label, who recently were part of a public offering of stock. It remains to be seen how all this business mumbo-jumbo will evolve, but usually in such matters cooler heads eventually prevail and things work out for all involved.

MUDVAYNE: After having their latest disc, *Lost & Found* make a #2 chart debut last May, and after tearing things up on the main stage at Ozzfest, it would seem that all is right in the world of Mudvayne. And according to bassist Ryan Martinie that perception is pretty close to the truth! "I don't think there's been a time when we've been happier with who and what we are as a band," he said. "The way the fans have accepted our changes (i.e. dropping their trademark make-up) has been very cool. We owe them a lot, and hopefully this album and this tour has helped begin to pay them back."

JUDAS PRIEST: Their first headlining tour with Rob Halford in 15 years is underway, and the members of Judas Priest couldn't be more stoked about it. "This is something I've been envisioning for a long time," said guitarist Glenn Tipton. "While we're all quite proud of everything we've accomplished with Priest in the years that Rob was away, having him back in the band and performing in front of thousands of fans every night is incredible."

P.O.D.: One of the hot topics in the rock world at the moment is guessing who the guest stars will end up being on P.O.D.'s next album. According to studio sources the band has invited everyone from members of Aerosmith to key players on the rap scene to come down and work with the P.O.D.

gang on a track or two. "This album will have some surprises, that's for sure," said vocalist Sonny. "But we don't want to reveal too much too early—otherwise it won't be a surprise!"

CORRECTION

In our July issue, *The Top 100 Metal CDs of All-Time*, we inadvertently ran a photo of a later version of Poison along-side our presentation of their legendary disc, *Look What the Cat Dragged In*. We are well aware that Bret Michaels, C.C. DeVille, Rikki Rockett and Bobby Dall formed Poison at this time-- and now you are as well.



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BY WINSTON CUMMINGS

REZNOR'S REVENGE!

With *Teeth* is with us. And make no mistake about it, the arrival of a new album from Nine Inch Nails qualifies as BIG NEWS in rock and roll circles. After all, NIN main man Trent Reznor easily ranks among the most enigmatic forces in the contemporary music world. The simple truth is that none of us ever really know what we're gonna get from Mr. Reznor... or when we're gonna get it. Years often pass between NIN album releases, and the unit's infrequent tour dates inspire instant calendar circling from any true rock aficionado. Perhaps the remaining "novelty" that surrounds NIN explains much of the focus that's been placed on the band's new disc and their subsequent tour, which has already featured a performance at the renowned Coachella Festival in California. With the release of *With Teeth* (NIN's first album since 1999's *The Fragile*), it seems as if the often reclusive Reznor has chosen to provide his ever-loyal minions with a unique view into his always fascinating musical universe.

"This is a special album," Reznor said. "But I think this one may be a little more accessible, but perhaps I'm not the best judge of that."

Perhaps Reznor isn't the best judge of his own impact on the rock and roll scene, but there's no questioning the degree of influence he's exerted over the last 15 years on a generation of followers. Whether he liked it or not, in the post-Cobain mid-'90s Reznor was clearly his generation's most potent musical force. In addition to virtually single-handedly creating such platinum-selling masterworks as *The Downward Spiral*, NIN's main man emerged as the driving force behind an entire branch of the alternative rock family tree. The brilliant but occasionally unpredictable Reznor forged a musical persona so pervasive that his influence touched the artistic souls of just about every performer then inhabiting the rock jungle. From musical descendants such as Marilyn Manson—who enjoyed his greatest success under Reznor's hands-on production efforts—to a generation of bands that emerged under his all-encompassing musical perspectives, this charismatic, black-haired visionary blossomed into his era's most influential rock and roll guiding light.

"My songs are so personal, they come from deep inside me," Reznor stated. "I start writing down my thoughts—usually very dark, depressing thoughts—and those eventually become the lyrics to my songs."

Growing up in rural Mercer, Pennsylvania, Reznor always sensed that he never fit in with the small town values that his parents embraced so passionately. While studying piano at the tender age of five, young Trent began to become aware that he possessed a special gift—one that his sports-loving school mates failed to understand. He was encouraged to focus virtually all of his attentions on music, foregoing a variety of social activities that he now admits may have made him "a little more normal." But after practicing for eight hours a day, six days a week for the better part of the next decade, something magical happened—Reznor discovered rock and roll, Kiss in particular, and his life was changed forever.

"When your world has basically consisted of being trained to be a classical pianist by a nun," Reznor said, "the idea of standing on stage breathing fire, spouting blood and playing loud rock and roll was incredibly exciting to me."

Despite his strong inclination to drop everything else and immediately begin pursuing a career as a rock and roll musician, Reznor's life briefly followed a much more predictable path. He continued studying piano, and eventually went off to Allegheny College where he geeked out on computer technology. Soon Reznor began wondering how he could combine his technological knowledge with his love for music. After hearing the instantly forgettable brand of synthesizer-inspired rock of the mid-'80s, he felt he had discovered the answer.

"It was an interesting time, not so much for the music that was being made, but because synthesizers were finally reaching the point that the average musician could afford them," he said. "I went out and got a sequencer that I could attach to my computer, and that opened up a whole new world for me."

It wasn't long before Reznor turned his back on higher education, moved to Cleveland and began working in a local recording studio. During days Reznor would listen to as much music as possible, then late at night, just before the studio would shut down, he'd go in and fool around with the equipment, familiarizing himself with as many studio techniques and recording quirks as possible. Reznor soon began to develop his own hard-edged style that incorporated his understanding of technology with his love of rock and roll. It was an exciting time of discovery, a period that laid the foundation for what would soon emerge as Nine Inch Nails.

"Making music was a dream to me," he said. "It was also my greatest fear. I had spent most of my life playing pieces by classical composers—now I wanted to write my own music. That was very intimidating; it was a great achievement for me when I wrote my first song at the age of 23."

That sense of accomplishment soon led to the creation of demo tapes that by 1988 had made the rounds and been passed on by every major label. Finally a small indie firm decided to give Reznor a few bucks and allow him to record the first NIN disc, *Pretty Hate Machine*, a hard, confusing and all-together cynical view of the world that surrounded him. Critics either loved it or hated it—but few ignored it. Reznor followed up that initial success with two EPs, *Broken* and *Fixed* both of which further employed his own blend of technology and metal to present a totally unique musical amalgam.

Though he attempted to hide behind the Nine Inch Nails band name (though for all intents and purposes he was the entire band), Reznor's sound soon became one of the most recognizable in the rock sphere. And when *The Downward Spiral* soared past double platinum in 1995, there was no doubt left in anyone's mind that this guy was more than a successful rock musician, he was a true musical visionary. Now with the arrival of *With Teeth*, the latest chapter in the ever-fascinating NIN tale is upon us. And while over the years he has remained a mysterious and at times tempestuous force, there can now be no question that Trent Reznor truly has become the voice of his generation.

"This album may be a little more accessible."

PHOTO: ADAM BEILAWSKI



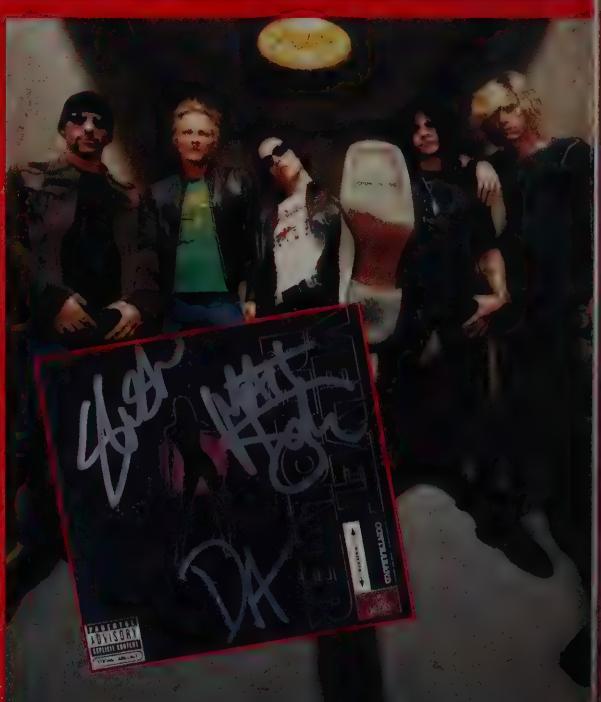
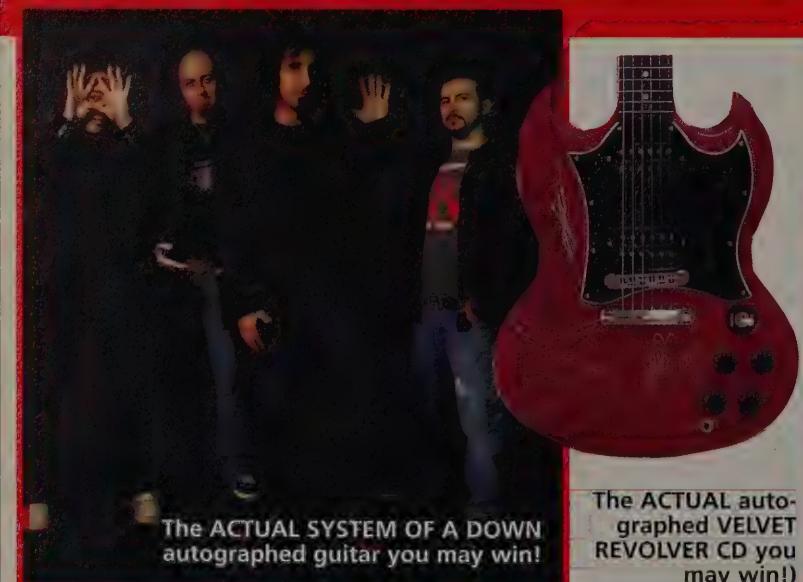
TRENT REZNOR

HP

HIT PARADER'S ULTIMATE

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All winners will be chosen at random—and prizes will be awarded in a similar fashion. So while we *want* your answers to be pithy and entertaining (just to keep us awake as we read through thousands of responses!) the brilliance of your prose will in no-way dictate your chances of winning. Hey, leave the brilliant writing to us... just send in your entry for *Hit Parader's Ultimate Heavy Metal Contest* and let the fun begin!

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 1, 2005

For a copy of the Official Rules to HP's Ultimate Heavy Metal Contest, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Hit Parader's Ultimate Heavy Metal Contest Rules, 210 Route 4 East, Suite 211, Paramus, NJ 07652-5103 or go to www.hitparader.com/heavymetalcontest/rules.html

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"We're the kind of band that gets really pissed off if we hear stuff on the radio that doesn't have any real conviction and substance."

BY TOM LONG

So many bands currently operating on the contemporary music scene seem too damned determined to "fit in." They sell their rock and roll souls in order to ensure a shot at radio and MTV airplay, and sacrifice their creative vision in order to pursue the proverbial brass ring. They cut a rough edge here, trim a ragged note there, all in the vain attempt to ensure their shot at the Big Time. Well, you can rest assured that despite their lilting name, A Static Lullaby ain't about to sacrifice nuthin' for nobody! Blending a visceral roar with surprisingly accessible melodies, on their sophomore release, **Faso Latido**, this Orange County, CA unit has made a solid name for themselves via their ability to mix punk, metal and pop reactants into a totally unique combination. But for vocalist Joe Brown, bassist Phil Pirrone, guitarist Dan Arnold, guitarist Nathan Lindeman and drummer Brett Dinovo causing a bit of a musical ruckus kind'a goes with the territory they've chosen to inhabit.

"We're the kind of band that gets really pissed off if we hear stuff on the radio that doesn't have any real conviction and substance," Brown said. "If you don't have that, what's the point of making music? When you're given the incredible chance to be in a band that's allowed to make albums, why not take advantage of that opportunity and

actually make music that says something."

Brown is well aware that such an *obvious* attitude goes radically against the grain of much modern rock philosophy. The "take no chances" approach he's so often heard around him has inspired Brown and his cohorts to adopt of "take no prisoners" mode throughout **Faso Latido**. With songs like *Calmer Than You Are* and *Cash Cowboys* that ripple with intensity—while taking a not-so-subtle bite at the record industry hand that feeds them—A Static Lullaby has emerged as a bright light in the "baby band" galaxy, a group proud to express their beliefs, and do so in a highly unconventional manner.

"Music has the ability to change your life... if you let it," Brown said. "But if music is going to play that role, it has to be something special. That's what we strive to create. Even if all some of our songs do is make you stop and think, then we've accomplished something important. For us, creating music is something very cerebral, but it's also very instinctual."

Brown has been following his instincts since he first joined forces with his four high school classmates to form A Static Lullaby back in late 2001. It took the ambitious unit

only two weeks of writing and rehearsing before they felt ready to play their first live show, and only months later were being recognized throughout So Cal as one of the area's best young bands. Indeed, things happened quickly for A Static Lullaby, and by the summer of 2002 they had recorded their first EP, *Withered*, which led directly to them being signed to a major label. By year's end they had recorded their debut disc, **Don't Forget To Breath**, which first introduced the group's eclectic style to an international audience. And while that album didn't light up the skies in a commercial sense, it allowed them to tour the world with the likes of AFI and A Chemical Romance, and laid the foundation for **Faso Latido**.

"The growth we've experienced over the last three years has been incredible," Brown said. "We were very happy with the way this band operated when we made our first album, but after we came off the road last year, we knew that we each wanted to take a little time apart to reconnect with what makes us click with the music of this band. When we got back together, the energy and the magic was there. It was our job to try and capture that in the studio. I think that's exactly what we've done. I may be a bit prejudiced, but I don't think there's another band out there that sounds anything like us."

A STATIC LULLABY

MUSIC IN MOTION

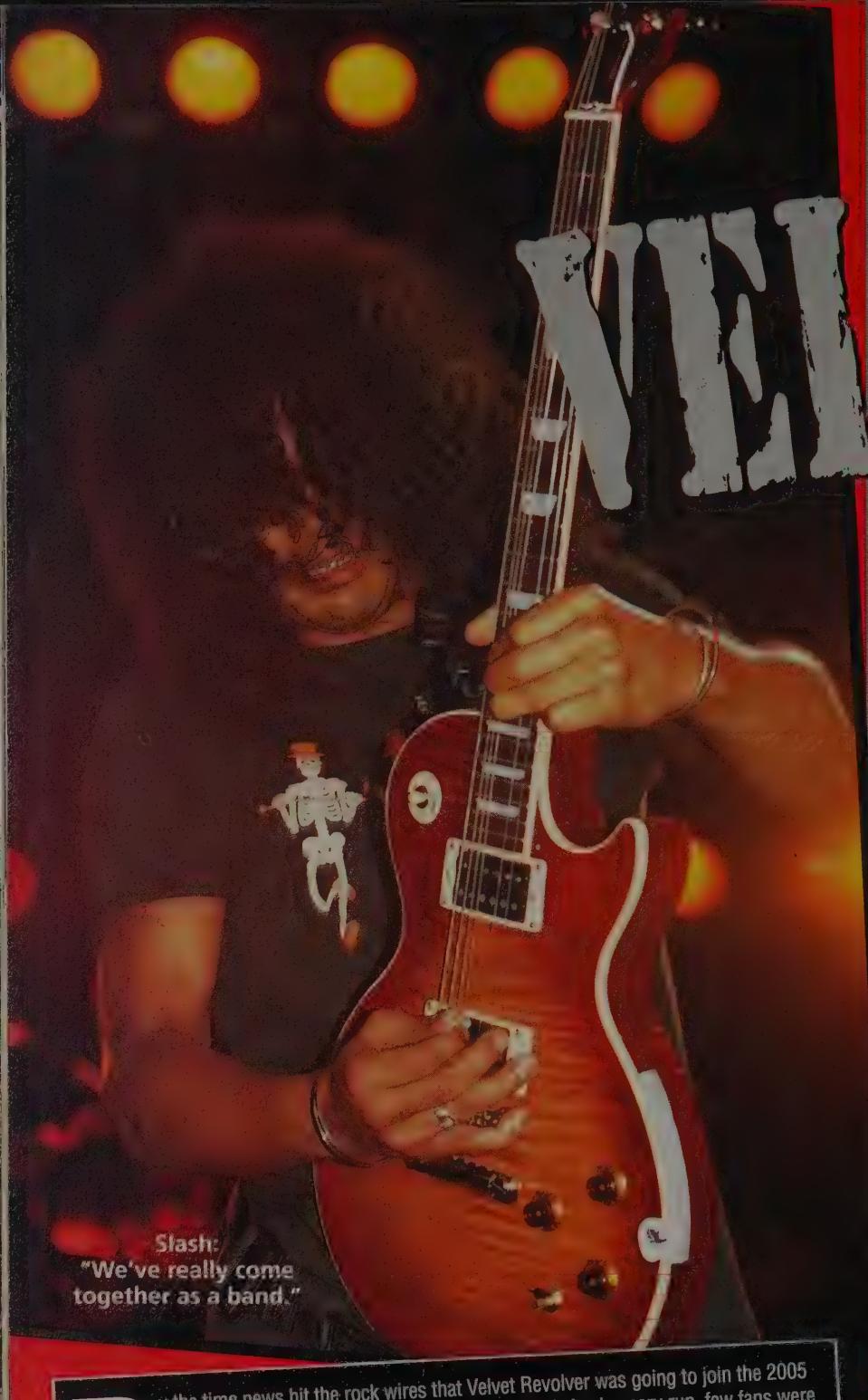
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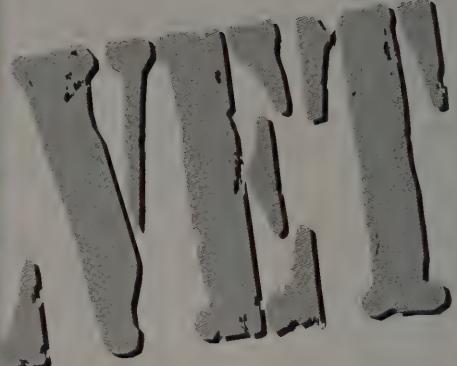
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Slash:

"We've really come together as a band."

By the time news hit the rock wires that Velvet Revolver was going to join the 2005 Ozzfest for the last seven shows of that tour's 10th Anniversary run, few fans were caught by surprise. Rumors indicating that this chart-topping hard rock unit would step into the co-headlining position (under Black Sabbath) when Iron Maiden took off to fulfill their late-summer European festival commitments, had coursed through the music underground for months prior to such speculation being made "official" in early May. But for fans of this unit's rugged, bluesy hard rock style, word that guitarist Slash, vocalist Scott Weiland, bassist Duff McKagan, drummer Matt Sorum and rhythm guitarist Dave Kushner would be making their Ozzfest presence felt was certainly a big deal. After all, the band's debut disc, *Contraband*, has now sold nearly two million copies, in the process spawning a string of radio-friendly hits like *Slither* and *Dirty Little Thing* that have finally begun to cast this unit's noble Guns N' Roses and STP lineage into the background. Recently we spoke to Slash to get an update on the musical phenomenon known as Velvet Revolver.



Hit Parader: Why did you decide to play the last seven *Ozzfest* shows?

Slash: It seemed like a cool thing to do. We hadn't really performed as part of a big American festival, and it struck us as something that would be a lot of fun. We had finished the last scheduled American leg of our tour back in May, and then we spent a lot of the early part of summer over in Europe. So the chance to come back and be part of a show like this was perfect for us... the timing couldn't have been better.

HP: Are you at all concerned that you're a classic "hard rock" band, while the rest of the bill is more traditional heavy metal acts?

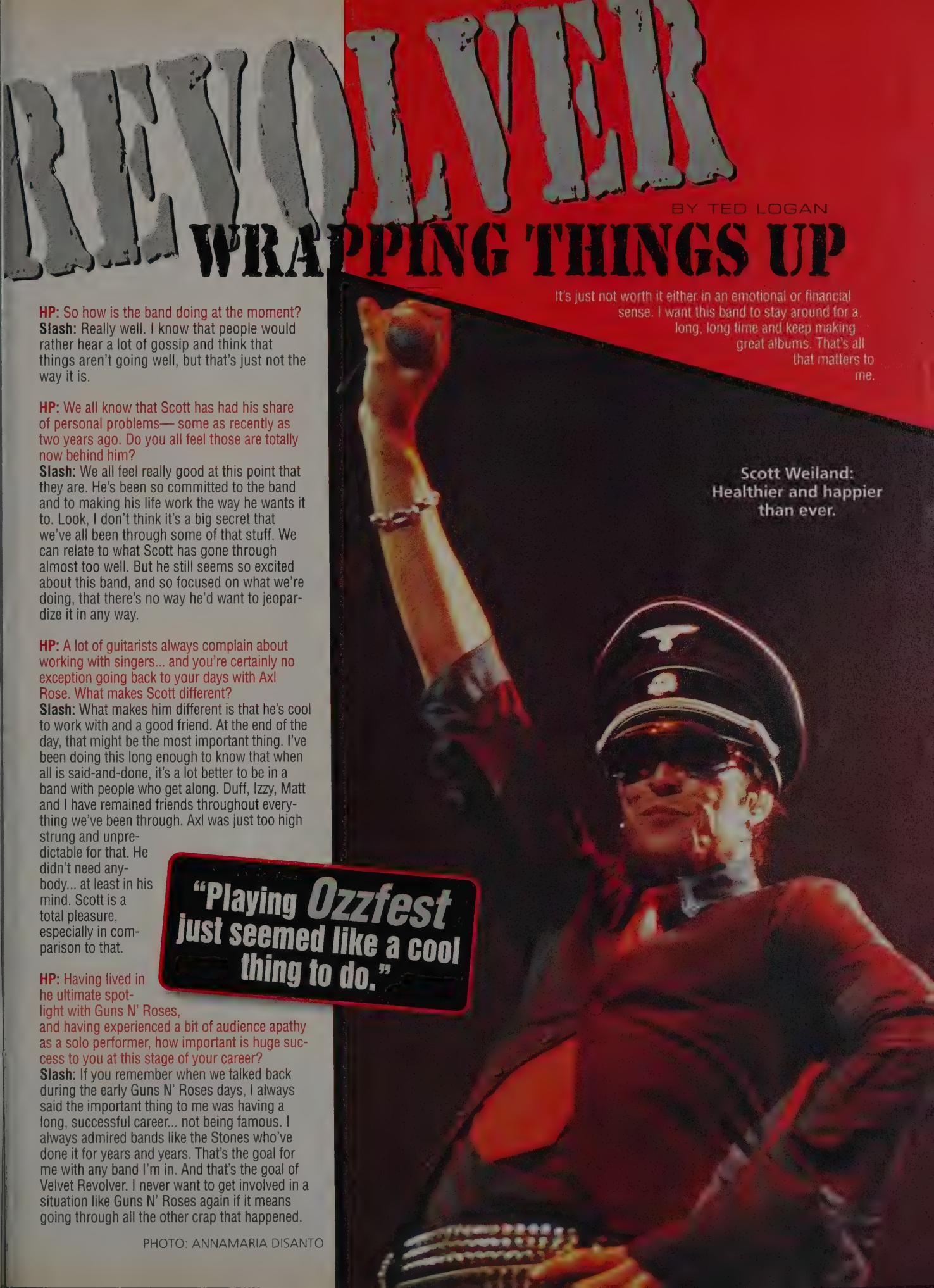
Slash: Nah, to our way of looking at it, it's all great rock and roll. Black Sabbath is such a great band, and the chance to get on stage before them and share our music with their audience is a wonderful opportunity for us. Hey, we're pretty heavy. We can be as loud as anyone when the opportunity hits. And I'm looking forward to seeing some of the other bands on the show because I haven't had the chance to check out a lot of 'em before.

HP: As you look back over the 15 months since *Contraband* was released, how pleased—or surprised—are you?

Slash: I'm very pleased, and kind of surprised. It's not like this was a guaranteed success. Looking back on it, a lot of people seem to now be saying, "Oh yeah, well you had some of the guys from Guns N' Roses, and you had the singer of the Stone Temple Pilots, so how couldn't it succeed?" Well, those same people weren't saying that a couple of years ago! We had to prove ourselves by making a great album filled with songs that people wanted to hear. We did that.

HP: Have you enjoyed being back in the spotlight?

Slash: It feels great because it's happening for all the right reasons. People are interested in us because they believe that we make some great music, and we think they're right. It's also interesting that a lot of fans who may have been too young to fully appreciate Guns N' roses at the height of their success seem to be really getting into Velvet Revolver. But what's the best thing for me is to be working with people who love what they're doing, and really care about one another. It's nice to be playing together and making some really exciting music.



VELVET REVOLVER

WRAPPING THINGS UP

BY TED LOGAN

HP: So how is the band doing at the moment?

Slash: Really well. I know that people would rather hear a lot of gossip and think that things aren't going well, but that's just not the way it is.

HP: We all know that Scott has had his share of personal problems—some as recently as two years ago. Do you all feel those are totally now behind him?

Slash: We all feel really good at this point that they are. He's been so committed to the band and to making his life work the way he wants it to. Look, I don't think it's a big secret that we've all been through some of that stuff. We can relate to what Scott has gone through almost too well. But he still seems so excited about this band, and so focused on what we're doing, that there's no way he'd want to jeopardize it in any way.

HP: A lot of guitarists always complain about working with singers... and you're certainly no exception going back to your days with Axl Rose. What makes Scott different?

Slash: What makes him different is that he's cool to work with and a good friend. At the end of the day, that might be the most important thing. I've been doing this long enough to know that when all is said-and-done, it's a lot better to be in a band with people who get along. Duff, Izzy, Matt and I have remained friends throughout everything we've been through. Axl was just too high strung and unpredictable for that. He didn't need anybody... at least in his mind. Scott is a total pleasure, especially in comparison to that.

HP: Having lived in the ultimate spotlight with Guns N' Roses, and having experienced a bit of audience apathy as a solo performer, how important is huge success to you at this stage of your career?

Slash: If you remember when we talked back during the early Guns N' Roses days, I always said the important thing to me was having a long, successful career... not being famous. I always admired bands like the Stones who've done it for years and years. That's the goal for me with any band I'm in. And that's the goal of Velvet Revolver. I never want to get involved in a situation like Guns N' Roses again if it means going through all the other crap that happened.

It's just not worth it either in an emotional or financial sense. I want this band to stay around for a long, long time and keep making great albums. That's all that matters to me.

Scott Weiland:
Healthier and happier
than ever.

**"Playing Ozzfest
just seemed like a cool
thing to do."**

To some followers of the heavy metal scene it seemed that prior to taking on the role as Second Stage headliner for this year's *Ozzfest*, Rob Zombie had been laying low for a long time. After all, it's been nearly three years since the appearance of his last disc, *The Sinister Urge*, and nearly two years since the conclusion of his last world tour. But make no mistake about it, Mr. Z has been doing *anything* but kickin' back. Over the last few years he has completed work on his second Big Screen blockbuster, *The Devil's Rejects* (the follow-up to his 2003 quasi-classic gore-fest, *House of 1000 Corpses*) and he's been contributing soundtrack tunes to a variety of Hollywood projects. In addition, he's currently in the midst of writing material for his third solo disc, and—of course—he's one of the main attractions at this summer's *Ozzfest*, where he's been sharing the spotlight with the likes of Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden and Mudvayne.

"I've always been at my best when I've been active," he said. "And this has been a busy time for me. Those fans who only know me through my music may be wondering what I've been up to—but they'll soon find out!"

To anyone that has followed his eclectic career, it is clear that Zombie has always prided himself in doing things in a fashion far from the ordinary. Whether that attitude is best reflected on his albums, his movies, his MTV videos or his always-outlandish stage productions, the undeniable fact is that throughout his career Zombie has taken particular pride in pushing the parameters of the rock empire to their furthest extremes, and then not-so-gently probing what lies beyond.

Certainly this approach has brought Zombie world-wide acclaim over the last two decades. First, his bastard brain child, White Zombie, ruled the early '90s metal roost with such discs as *El Sexorcisto: Devil Music Vol. 1*, and *Astro Creep: 2000*. Then, upon that band's demise in 1998, he launched a multi-faceted solo career that has already seen his efforts, *Hellbilly Deluxe* and *The Sinister Urge*, emerge as chart-topping hits. All-in-all it's been a wild ride for this admittedly off-center rock and roll "beast" who can seemingly look at any human condition and simultaneously see the humor, pain and pathos of the situation.

"I am definitely an observer of humanity," he said. "But most of my creativity is spurred by my own imagination. Few things I've ever seen or experienced can match what the mind can come up with."

For all of his current acclaim, much of Zombie's past is cloaked in a veil of intrigue. But as often as one may ask, Zombie remains rather reluctant to reveal the mysteries of his upbringing, preferring to let them add to his mystique. With a little careful prodding, however, he'll reveal a few of the secrets of his early days—the keys to what transformed this once mild-mannered East Coast native into a true-blue, hells bells "zombie". Most of his reminiscences seem to begin around 1985, the year White Zombie came into being in the heart of the New York City punk scene.

"I was always interested in unusual things," he said. "Long before I ever thought about starting a

band I was into seeing horror movies and reading about serial killers. So when I was first getting into music, the whole New York 'alternative' scene of the early '80s was flourishing and the kind of imagery associated with that kind of stuff just fit right in."

ROB ZOMBIE RENAISSANCE MAN

"I am definitely an observer of humanity."

Rob and his musical cohorts were indeed so attracted to Grade-B horror flicks, that when it came time to name his fledgling band he turned to the 1932 Bela Lugosi scream fest *White Zombie* for inspiration. And when the first version of White Zombie hit the stages of such notorious New York clubs as CBGB's, Rob mixed his penchant for bizarre visual imagery with the group's equally unusual sound, a style that was then described as a "marriage of Black Sabbath, Motorhead and the Ramones." While the critics who presented such a description were attempting to be far from complementary, nothing could have pleased Rob more.

"The New York underground movement of the mid-'80s, which we were unquestionably a part of, wasn't really into hard rock," he said. "And when we switched over to metal, we brought all that 'alternative' stuff with us. That had never existed there before."

Through the first five years of the band's career, it was White Zombie's unpredictable blending of diverse stylistic elements that kept them from attaining more than a cult following. Their early indie releases, such as the EP *Psycho Head Blowout* and albums like *Soulcrusher* and *Make Them Die Slowly* only served to further confuse the commercially-attuned rockers of the era. Clearly, White Zombie's hell on wheels sound and outrageous appearance was just considered "unacceptable" by mainstream metal society. But good things occasionally come to those who wait, and as the hard rock scene began to change in the early '90s, new opportu-

nities opened up for Rob and his band. After years of struggling, they finally hit pay dirt when they were signed by a mega-sized record deal and soon found themselves headed directly for the metal mother load.

"We had done all we could with the independent labels," Rob said. "When a major label came knocking we thought it was a great opportunity for us. The best part is that they agreed to let us do what we do. They didn't come in and try to change a thing."

After a highly successful six year run, by the late '90s Rob believed that his time with White Zombie had run its course. After much discussion and some consternation, he decided to go it alone as a solo performer, releasing *Hellbilly Deluxe* in 1999. When that disc (and its subsequent tour) attained levels equal to anything that White Zombie had previously enjoyed, any notion that this unique performer had made the wrong career decision was quickly cast aside. Then with the impact caused by *The Sinister Urge* adding another level of gloss to his solo status in 2002, it became apparent that Rob Zombie's decidedly warped view of the world would continue to entertain, enlighten and enrage all those whose lives his music touched. And now with his resurfacing as part of *Ozzfest 2005*, it seems as if heavy metal's master of the macabre is about to begin another musical thrill ride none of us will soon forget.

BY PATRICK JAMES



ROB ZOMBIE **HP**

MUDVAYNE

BY TED ARMSTRONG

DOING IT THEIR WAY

There were some "constants" that hard rock fans felt they could always count on; Ozzy being crazy... Slayer being heavy... System of a Down being controversial... and Mudvayne being wild. Well, as the old saying goes, three out of four ain't bad. The Ozz may still be crazy, Slayer may still be able to lay down the metal magic and System may still raise the shackles of rock and roll conservatives... but something is very different in the world of Mudvayne.

Yes, Mudvayne have changed. But whether or not that change is one for the better still remains to be seen... at least in the eyes and ears of this one-time shock rock contingent's loyal followers. With their trademark makeup (which frequently assumed the guise of everything from bug-eyed alien invaders to blood-spattered metal madmen) now a thing of the past, and the band's outwardly outrageous stage shows being noticeably toned down, it's the dawning of a new day for these still-heavy-as-they-wanna-be Illinois rockers. Yet for vocalist Chad Gray, guitarist Greg Tribbett, bassist Ryan Martinie and drummer Matt McDonough, as they continue to unleash the contents of their latest disc, *Lost and Found*, upon the heavy metal world, they know there are as many questions as answers surrounding their highly successful and apparently highly transitional unit.

"We know that some of the fans are going to take a little convincing," Tribbett said. "But hopefully we've earned their trust over the last few years, and they'll accept the fact that we know what's best for Mudvayne. It was time for us to do this. But if anyone thinks that we're going 'soft' because we're not going to look as wild as we once did, they'd better think again. Just listen to this music. This is an incredibly raw album. We think it's gonna blow people away because of the feel this music has. We're very proud of it."

On such new songs as *Just*, *Pushing Through* and *Happy*, the Mudvayne mob have shown the inherent flexibility, as well as the lingering intensity of their metallic approach. While their previous disc, 2002's *The End of All Things to Come*, showed a more cerebral, studio-savvy band than the strident unit on display on the group's 2001 debut, *L.D. 50*, on *Lost and Found* this quartet has unmistakably taken their style to the next level. By blending some slick studio craftsmanship with a razor-edged aggressiveness that fills each song with a pulsating brand of electricity, Mudvayne have shown that their style is equal parts evolution and revolution. Tribbett admits that despite the glowing critical accolades fast coming the way of *Lost and Found*, achieving the degree of intensity required to make their new material work wasn't particularly easy for Mudvayne.

"Making music as complex as this takes a lot of time," he said. "We began writing a year ago, and even when we thought we were done with the album at the end of last summer, we realized that there was still some work we wanted to do. It's a continual work in progress. If we could, we'd probably keep working on these songs for the next decade. But you reach a point where you just have to say that enough's enough. You've got to let go. We did push the release date of the album back about three months so we could get everything the way we wanted it, but by the end of the year, we knew it was time."

Time, indeed! Now it's time for this highly cerebral and highly unpredictable Midwestern unit to roll out their latest creations and let the rock world absorb their complex, overwhelming charms. But waiting for the music scene to catch up with their latest derring do is nothing new for Mudvayne. Ever since they first hit the metal mainstream more than four years ago, they've ridden the highs of critical kudos and fan support, and suffered the indignities of having their unique stylings virtually ignored by the powerful forces at rock radio and MTV. But with their new stripped-down, no-nonsense, pedal-to-the-metal presentations making jaws drop and eyes pop wherever the Vayne have plugged in their gear, it

seems as if a New Era has already begun to dawn for this ever-fearsome foursome.

"The dark cartoon-like quality of what we had created with our first two albums became the thing that everyone related to—often at the expense of the music," Tribbett said. "That wasn't something we could accept. The look and the theatrics were there to augment the music, not to disguise or overwhelm it. That was an unfortunate reality that we realized soon after our previous album was released. We think that once people get by the changes in the way we look, they'll get into the music, and that's really all that matters."

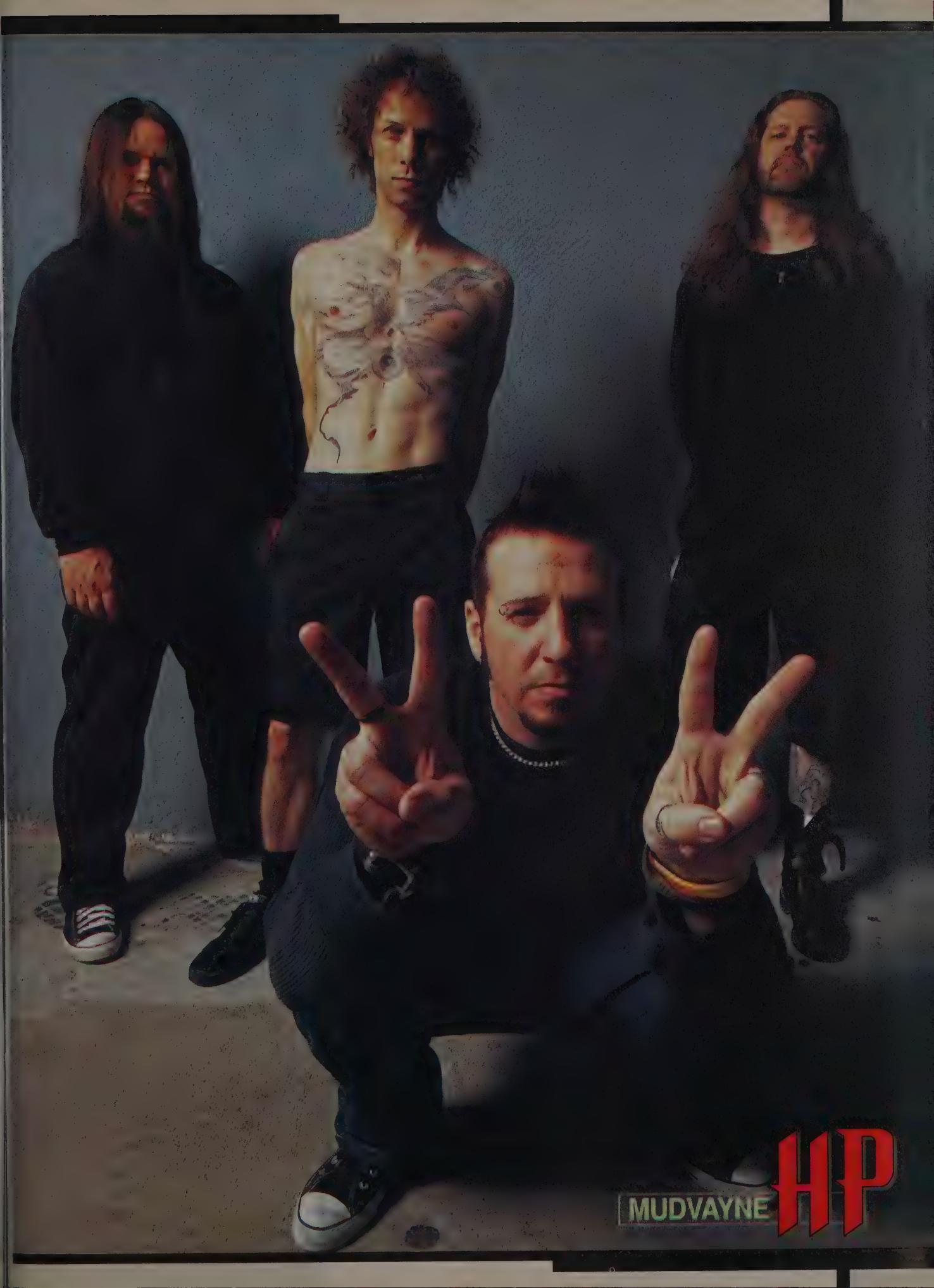
As an interesting sidelight to the flurry of activity that has recently surrounded Mudvayne, it has been reported by inside sources that the band's radical changes

"Making music as complex as this takes a lot of time."

"Hopefully we've earned the trust of the fans by now."

have also made their record label reexamine the manner in which they will approach the marketing of the band. Apparently, the label was somewhat disappointed by the sales response to *The End of All Things to Come*, and was frustrated by MTV's unwillingness to air the unit's videos. But when it came time for the Vayne to rally the troops behind the making of their controversial new video *Determined*, both the key forces at their label, and their ever-rabid fan-base were ready, willing and able to throw their full muscle behind the group's effort. All this support has brought a much-needed smile to the faces of the Vayne's four members.

"Just knowing the label has faith in us, and that they're ready to keep pushing us as hard as we're gonna push ourselves is great news," Tribbett said. "We always felt that the fans would be there, but the kind of reaction that we enjoyed with making the new video was more than we could have expected. We made *Determined* at this building in New York that used to be a church before it became a rock club. The vibe in there was amazing—as was the turn-out of fans. We asked for their support, and they certainly gave it."



MUDVAYNE

HP

JUDAS PRIEST

BY STEVE LEWIS

Birmingham, England; a quaint, somewhat dreary, mid-sized city located in the heart of the British Isles. In many ways Birmingham is the English equivalent of towns like Pittsburgh or Detroit—major industrial centers that felt the brunt of economic recession when the swing of business began to move out of the urban centers and towards more suburban sprawl. It was in this decidedly blue collar environment that Judas Priest's legendary vocalist Rob Halford grew up in post World War II England. Despite the war having been over for nearly a decade by the time of Halford's birth, things in Birmingham had never quite returned to normal—and they wouldn't until the city underwent an urban renewal in the mid-'80s. There was a dark side to Birmingham in the '50s and early '60s—Rob's formative years—and it infused his sensibilities with an intensity and perspective that would later mark much of his work with Priest.

"Birmingham was your typical working class town," Halford explained. "Americans may have trouble understanding the class system that still exists in England, but when you were born to a working class family, you were supposed to stay in the working class. Upward mobility has never been a popular concept in England. But all-in-all my early years were fun and exciting—and Birmingham was quite the place to find good rock and roll."

Not only did virtually all of England's top hard rock bands—groups like Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple—venture through Birmingham during Halford's teens, but the city also had the notable claim to fame of producing Black Sabbath, the band many rock experts state first brought the term "heavy metal" into the rock and roll lexicon. With Sabbath blazing a clear artistic path, it wasn't hard for young Rob to envision himself as the vocalist for his own heavy metal band. Soon, he had formed his own group which played material in pubs and clubs throughout the area. But it wasn't until 1975, when he ran into two young local guitarists named K.K. Downing and Glenn Tipton—who had recently formed a band of their own called Judas Priest—that Rob's career aspirations began to really take shape.

"Glenn and Ken had been working together for a while before I met them," Halford said. "Judas Priest had been playing around Birmingham, and they had another vocalist at the time, but as things worked out, that guy left, and we kind of naturally all fell together. That's how I started playing with Priest. There was already a solid base for our kind of music in Birmingham thanks to bands like Black Sabbath, but we were trying to do something a little different—and I think we accomplished that goal."

Indeed, over the next 18 years Judas Priest was to create a musical legacy virtual-

ly unmatched in metal annals. Such albums as *Hellbent For Leather*, *British Steel*, and *Screaming For Vengeance* became hard rock classics, establishing Priest as a band as important as their metallic influences in terms of their impact on the *next* generation of bash brothers. But then, in 1993, Halford's long and glorious ride with Priest came to an apparent end. He felt that the winds of heavy metal energy were shifting away from Priest's more commercial style and towards a more extreme, cutting-edge sound. With that in mind he waved goodbye to Priest (at least for the next decade), and started anew with a series of solo bands designed to test heavy metal's cutting edge.

"Upward mobility has never been a popular concept in England."

"Those bands were never designed to be any sort of follow-up to Priest," he said. "If I had wanted to keep making music like we had made in Priest I would have gladly stayed in that band. I was certainly always very proud of all that we had accomplished in Priest over the years, and I was very sorry that things transpired in the manner they had towards the end. But I always believed the music we made together would stand the test of time, and that at some point there was always the chance that we would work together as Judas Priest once again."

Well, as anyone who hasn't lived with their head wrapped in a burke over the last two years already knows, the Priest/Halford reunion did occur in 2004—just in time for the band to celebrate their 30th Anniversary as co-headliners of last summer's *Ozzfest*.

Now this reconstituted unit has taken the next Big Step by releasing their long-awaited "comeback" album, *Angel of Retribution*, and launching their first arena tour of America in over a decade. And, as Halford is happy to report, the internal chemistry which seemed to fail the band back in the early '90s, is back stronger than ever.

"Once we started writing music together, it was like we had never been apart," said the shaven-headed vocalist. "Believe it or not, the rapport was instantaneous. As soon as I sat down with Glenn and K.K. to begin putting together some song ideas, it was like the years melted away. It didn't seem like we hadn't been together in a creative sense in more than a dozen years. It was an immediate return to the essence of Judas Priest—but perhaps with more focus and more commitment than ever before. It truly was magical. In a way, it was the exact manner that I had envisioned it happening in my head countless times when we were apart. But this was one of the few cases in life when reality lived up to those dreams."

Now, as the reunited Priest lineup launch their world tour in support of *Angel of Retribution*, it seems as if everything has come full-circle for Halford. While he has changed his home base from the overcast environs of Birmingham to the ever-sunny climes of Phoenix, AZ, he's still very much a Britisher at heart. When he steps on stage each night dressed in black leather and studs, he still exudes the quintessential metal ethic—one that he proudly states was born and nurtured in the working class city in which he was born.

"It's very much like the old saying," he joked. "You can take the boy out of Birmingham, but you can't take Birmingham out of the boy."

PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO

ROB HALFORD

HP

Make no mistake about it, in mid-2005 Audioslave just may be the biggest rock and roll band in the world. Their sophomore disc, *Out of Exile*, has already sold over a million copies, in the process spawning mega-hits like *Be Yourself* which capture the power and passion that characterizes the music created by this stellar contingent. The success of their second effort follows hot-on-the-heels of their super-sized, self-titled debut album which back in 2003 first established the fact that these exiles from Soundgarden and Rage Against the Machine were more than a "mere" supergroup—they were a band destined to dictate the course of the 21st Century hard rock scene. But for vocalist Chris Cornell, bassist Tim Commerford, guitarist Tom Morello and drummer Brad Wilk such responsibility is something they neither seek nor crave—and it is not something that they run away from in fear. Having overcome a myriad of internal problems just to survive their initial stages, this power-packed quartet now feel more confident than ever in their abilities as a band, as well as in their abilities to stick together through thick and thin. Recently we discussed the highs, the lows, and the middles of *Life With Audioslave* with the ever-informative Mr. Morello.

Hit Parader: What is the particular significance of the title *Out of Exile* to you?

Tom Morello: First off, it is a song on the album, one of our biggest "jams", so there was a natural affinity for making it the album title as well. As far as its significance goes, that's open for your interpretation, but it's a title that elicits a strong response when you hear it, and considering our past associations, it made a certain kind of sense to us. We've gone through some rough patches in this band, and we've come from being in different groups, and we've formed an amazing union. This is the first album where our sole focus was on the music we were making—there's a lot of solidarity here. In a sense we've all come from out of exile to form Audioslave.

HP: You mention some of the hurdles the band had to overcome last time. Are there any lingering problems now?

TM: Thankfully, no. You've got to remember that when we first got together, we all came in with different managers, lawyers and record labels. It was a very difficult situation. Chris had his label, booking agent and manager, and the three of us had ours. I think everyone around us realized the potential this band possessed, and they understandably didn't want to give up their rights to share in their half of the process. That's why we're in the unique situation of having our first album come out on one label and this one on another! It did make us all shake our heads and wonder what to do at one point. But everything kind of shook itself out, and we were able to proceed without any further difficulties.

Believe me, none of the problems ever existed between the four of us—it was all generated by all the business sides trying to grab their share... and almost pulling us apart in the process.

HP: After having survived that kind of ordeal, how satisfying was the success you enjoyed with the first album?

TM: It was amazing. We had all enjoyed our taste of success with our previous bands, and perhaps that initial introduction to success was more overwhelming and surprising, but it was no more satisfying. To know that we had created something special, and that the fans had responded so amazingly, was one of the highlights of my life. It also served as sort of vindication for us. It showed that despite what had been put before us to hinder us, we had overcome it all and succeeded.

HP: Was there one magical moment when you realized that all the past problems were behind

Machine was in what it presented. To me that's the most important thing.

HP: Rick Rubin produced *Out of Exile*—as he did *Audioslave*. At one time we heard that quite a few tracks were left over from your original recording sessions. Did any of those songs make the cut on this album?

TM: It's true that we had recorded 20 songs with Rick last time, and that only 14 of those songs made it onto our first album. But it's been three years since we were first in the studio, and we've grown so much as a band that none of those songs made it this time, despite being really strong songs. There may have been an idea or two that resurfaced, but that's about it. This time we recorded 21 songs, and only 12 made it onto the album. It's kind of nice to know that there are some excellent songs out there waiting for us should we ever need them.

HP: It's interesting that you're playing some of your former hits from Rage and

AUDIOSLAVE

IN FROM THE COLD

BY DAVID VOLKER

you and that Audioslave was actually going to work?

TM: I remember a night when we were playing Lollapalooza shortly after the first album had come out. The crowd was really behind us, and the music was just flowing. Everything we were playing just sounded great. I remember looking around at Chris, at Tim and Brad and just smiling. That was the moment!

HP: One of the criticisms leveled at Audioslave is that you've effectively turned your back on the political rhetoric that marked so much of your work with Rage Against the Machine.

TM: Well, this is a different band. I still have my beliefs and the causes that I support, which is why I formed the Axis of Justice with Serge Tankian from System of a Down. That's my outlet for that. But this band isn't the forum through which I always express my political beliefs. Chris is involved in writing the lyrics for our songs, so it's mostly his sentiments and beliefs that are expressed, and I'm totally fine with that. This band is totally honest and real in what it presents, just as Rage Against the

Soundgarden on this tour.

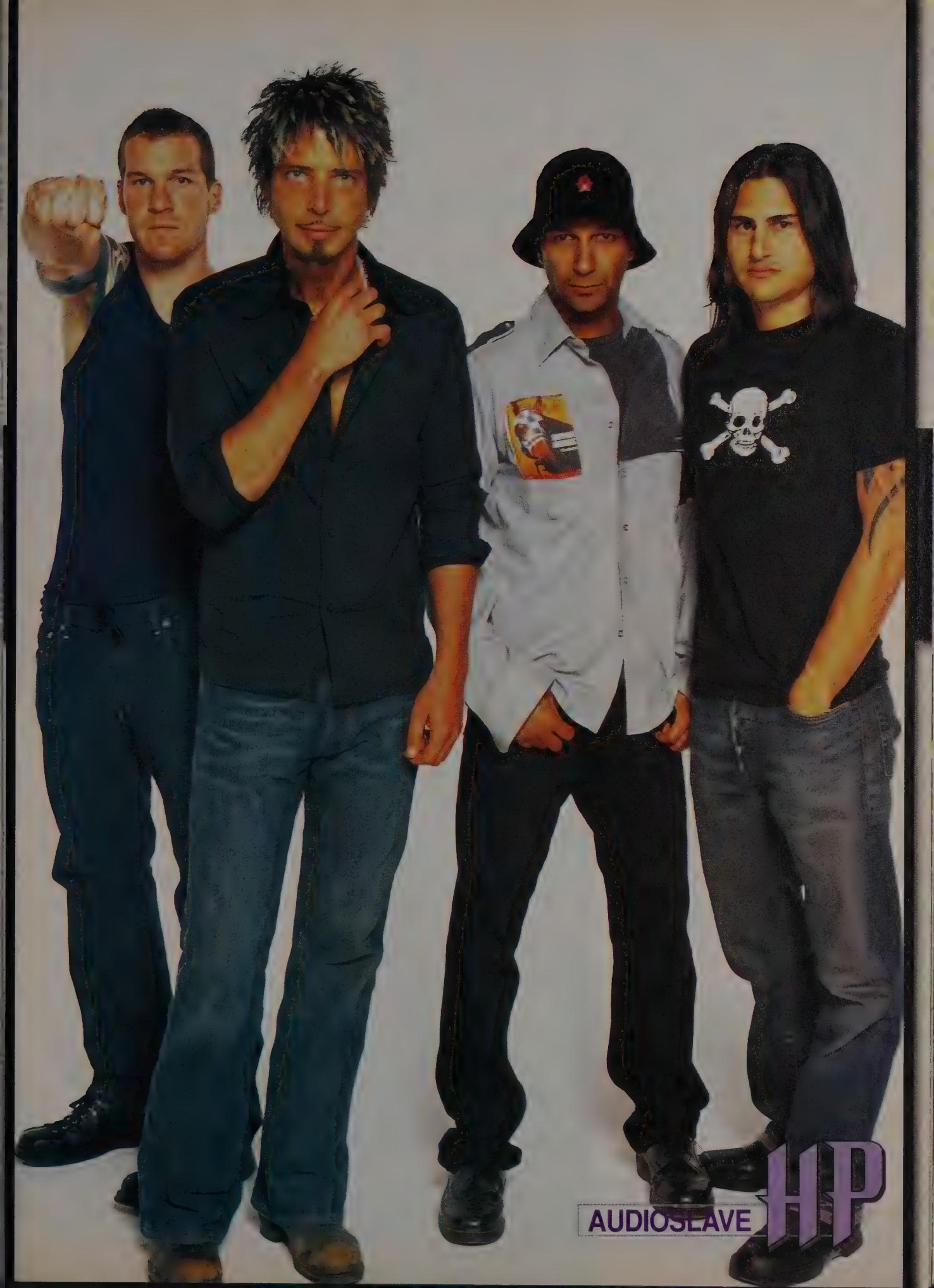
TM: We didn't feel comfortable doing that prior to this tour. We wanted to establish Audioslave as its own presence, and I feel we've done that. We're all very proud of the music we've created over the years, and we have every right to play it. Now that we're headlining shows and playing for two hours, we have time to feature some of those songs as well as the material from *Audioslave* and *Out of Exile*.

With Chris singing some of the Rage songs, there's a different twist to them—just as there is when we play the Soundgarden songs. But the crowd seems to really love it, and that's very important to us. We're definitely not hiding from our pasts.

HP: Is there one of the older songs that stands out for you?

TM: I think Chris does an amazing job on *Killing in the Name Of*, and the rest of us have grown quite comfortable with *Spoonman* and *Outshined*. We were a bit nervous about doing those songs at first, but now we feel totally comfortable with them. They're part of us, part of our combined history, and we're very proud of that.

"We've come from different groups to form this amazing union."



AUDIOSEAVE

HP

SEETHER

BY PJ MERKLE

Seether have broken in the international rock scene... and they've broken in a big way. Since the release of their 2003 disc *Disclaimer*, this South African unit has seen their rock stock soar, thanks primarily to their smash hit *Broken*, a song performed with Evanescence front-woman Amy Lee (who, by the way, happens to be the main squeeze of Seether vocalist/guitarist Shaun Morgan.) But now with the appearance of their latest album, *Karma & Effect*, Morgan, bassist Dale Stewart, guitarist Pat Callahan and drummer John Humphrey seem primed to take their initial rock and roll success to the next level of popularity. Seemingly, this is a band that can do it all— write great songs, and then deliver them both on album and stage. Recently we caught up with Morgan in the band's New York recording studio to get the inside word on Seether.

BREAKING THE RULES

Hit Parader: Much has changed for Seether since the release of *Disclaimer*. How confident is the band now as compared to when you recorded your first album?

Shaun Morgan: I'm very glad you're asking me that question today rather than a few months ago. Right now we're brimming with confidence because the record is finished and people seem to be reacting very well to it. A few months back, I know I had a very different feeling about things. I was second guessing a lot of the material and wondering if we were headed in the right direction. I imagine that's normal, but it's a very uncomfortable feeling.

HP: How has the band evolved since the last album?

SM: We've grown a great deal as a band and I feel we're now headed in a more direct path in the direction that we want to travel. There's that natural growing process which every group needs to go through... and trust me, we did! But we wrote for the better part of two years for this album— on the road, during breaks, whenever we had the chance— and all that hard effort has been worth it. But until you hear the finished product, with all the instrumental parts in place and the final vocal mixes, you never really know if you've hit your target. I think we have.

HP: To your way of thinking, what separates Seether from most of the other bands on the hard rock block?

SM: I would think that it's our willingness to experiment and take chances. A lot of the music I hear today is following a rather conventional verse-chorus-verse formula, and while we do that too on occasion, throughout this album we played with song structures, and the timing in which the songs were played, and that yielded some very interesting results. We can't think "Is this song going to make the label enough money?" It's important to us to be successful, but we've got to be proud of what we create as well.

HP: You've been a critical favorite as well as a commercial success. What's more important to you?

SM: We've been critical favorites? I thought they hated us! (Laughs) I read some of the reviews and they've rarely been complimentary. But I kind of expected that. I never really worry about how anyone else may react to us. I know it sounds a little self-centered, but the attitude we bring to our music is that if we're happy with what we create, then it'll be good enough because, believe me, we are by-far our own harshest critics.

HP: You've been understandably proud of your South African roots, but has being based in America for more time changed any of your cultural perspectives?

SM: Not really. I've always joked that South Africa is the 51st State. But there is a different outlook on life over there... one that is a lot more laid back. I like having a little more up-tempo feel around me, especially in a city like New York. New York can kick you in the ass a bit. It gets you away from your comfort level. I live with Amy in a big house in L.A., and you need to get away from that to get a little rawness involved. Also, when you spend more time in America, you can get caught up in the politics over here, and that serves as an inspiration— usually against what the administration is doing.

HP: How have the fans back home reacted to your international success?

SM: They seem quite pleased by it. I know there can be a temptation for people who grew up with you feeling a sense of abandonment when you go off to conquer the world. But our fans have remained very supportive of us and we love spending as much time as possible with them. Unfortunately, that becomes more and more difficult as we spend a good portion of our lives either in the recording studio or on the road.

HP: Give us a little insight into your creative process.

SM: Sometimes writing a song is as easy as sitting down in the back of the tour bus with a guitar and recording something in the span of 10 minutes. Other times, it can become a true labor to get everything to fit exactly the way you want it to. There isn't one way or another that works better. When we got ready to make this album, we took all the various songs, and song segments, that we had done over the last few years and worked on them for three months once we got into the studio. And, to be very honest, the results have exceeded my expectations.

HP: What would be an ideal road scenario for Seether in 2005? Would you like to headline, or would you be satisfied being "special guests" on a major tour?

SM: We've done both, and I wouldn't mind doing both again. With two albums out, we can easily headline and put on a great show. But if a great opening opportunity comes our way we're not going to be foolish enough to turn our back on it. There needs to be a balance, and hopefully before too much longer we'll be successful enough to conduct our own major tour and put all the issues such as that behind us.

HP: Is it a burden or a pleasure being known as the band that performed *Broken*?

SM: That song has given us our greatest recognition, so it's obviously a pleasure. But if everyone buys this album thinking that all they're going to be getting is more versions of that song, then they're in for a very rude surprise.

"We're finally traveling in a more direct path towards our goals."

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SEETHER

HP

SYSTEM OF A DOWN

BY JODI SUMMERS

Here we were in yet another faceless recording studio located deep in the heart of the San Fernando Valley. We were patiently waiting for System of a Down, and contemplating the photos adorning the walls of various rock gods from years gone by who have presumably recorded in these very chambers. Faith No More and Alice Cooper... is that Trent Reznor from NIN or Aerosmith's Joe Perry?

We wait and contemplate. System of a Down bassist Shavo Odadjian finally comes by to greet us and say that the others will be here shortly. We are escorted into a mixing studio, and a motion is made for us to sit on the couch, one of those woven '80s models that has clearly seen better days.

"I remember these couches... they were in my house," recalls vocalist Serj Tankian as he wanders in to join the festivities. "Yeah, I think my mom had these in 1989," chortles drummer John Dolmayan. "No man, I'm serious."

"It's amazing that there are relatively few cigarette burns on them," observes Serj. Vintage couches go fine with vintage producers. SOAD were in this valley recording studio mixing **Mezmerize** with Andy Wallace, a veteran studio rat and a sonically influential presence on the current music scene. He cut his chops in NYC during the rise of hip-hop in the early '80s. Along the way he re-mixed tracks for Bruce Springsteen and Prince, and got his big break by producing the Run D.M.C. / Aerosmith version of *Walk This Way*. The single teamed him with Def Jam founder Rick Rubin and the pair has worked together through the years producing such heavy groups as Slayer and Sepultura, and System of A Down. For those of you who keep track of such things, Wallace takes the mixing credit for both SOAD's **Toxicity** and **Steal This Album**.

System of a Down wrote some thirty tracks for their one-now, one-later **Mezmerize/Hypnotise** pairing and recorded them at Rick Rubin's famed Laurel Canyon studio between June and November of 2004. The project was produced by Rubin and band guitarist Daron Malakian.

As we looked over the spacious recording studio where SOAD were mixing their 2-disc set, we thought we'd start our interview with a most obvious but intriguing question:

Hit Parader: Playing live and recording – compare and contrast the two.

John Dolmayan: It's a pretty big difference.

Serj Tankian: You are sharp. (To John)

JD: You're much more under a microscope in the studio than you are live. People will be sitting there and listening to you with their headphones on, scrutinizing every nuance of your performance. When you play a show, people are there for the experience. You can get away with a lot more live than you can in the studio.

HP: When you're in the studio working together do you get that same kind of kinetic energy that happens when you're on stage?

ST: That's what we try and get on tape. A good recording of System of a Down—or any band, really—is when that synergy is there in the studio.

You pretend that it's live as much as possible, like you stand up instead of sitting. You do whatever you need to do to really connect with the other musicians and do whatever you need to do to get that flow. When it's great, you know it. We all do.

HP: How were you able to achieve that on this album?

JD: It's not that you try to achieve it, it's just something that happens. It's spontaneous. If you try to achieve it, it probably won't happen.

ST: We rehearsed a lot. Some bands in other projects might be able to go into the studio and start a song from scratch, layer it and record it in the studio in Pro Tools and then make it into a song. With this band we spend a lot of time arranging and working the songs and practicing, practicing, practicing. We practice before we go into the recording studio so that when we're there, we can concentrate more on performance and less on all the other stuff.

HP: How does a song like *Cigar* evolve? Does it change a lot from rehearsal to recording?

JD: It can. From the beginning of the recording process to the end you may sometimes have a very big change; sometimes you have no change. It has a lot to do with pre-production. Once you're in the studio and you're recording with a producer—in our case Rick Rubin, always Rick Rubin—a song is going to go through some kind of transformation. It may not necessarily be a musical transformation, it may be a vocal transformation, but it's a transformation nonetheless.

HP: Why did you decide to do a double album this time?

ST: Originally our intention was to do a single record. We kept bringing in songs, lots of songs, and at one point we looked at each other and realized that we had a lot more "A" songs than could possibly fit on one record. We couldn't for the life of us think of how we would deal with that scenario except to put out a double record. But, it was important to us to put out a double record in a way that people could digest the volume, and be able to get the next one. We did not want to hit them all at once with 20-something songs.

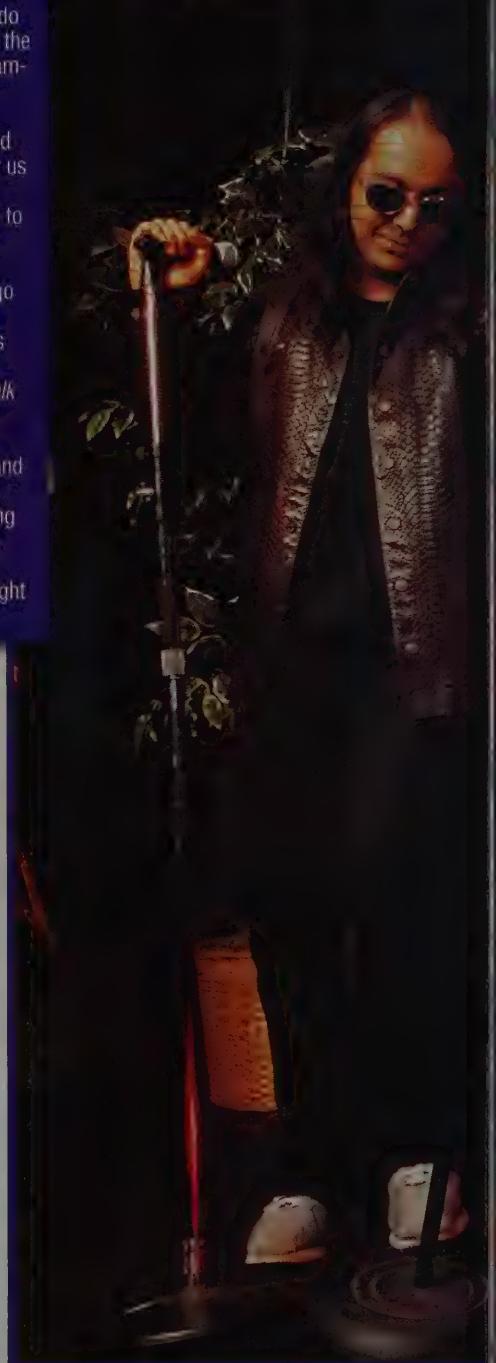
JD: Think of it as a double CD released in two parts.

ST: We designed the packaging in such a way that you can connect them.

JD: It's like Lord of the Rings, you knew there were going to be three movies, but you saw them one at a time.

ST: That's a perfect analogy. When we release the second one depends upon how long it takes people to take the first set of songs in...but right now we're looking at a 6 or 7 month timeline.

JD: We felt like during the **Toxicity** sessions we had a lot of amazing songs. When we released them a year-and-a half-later with **Steal This**

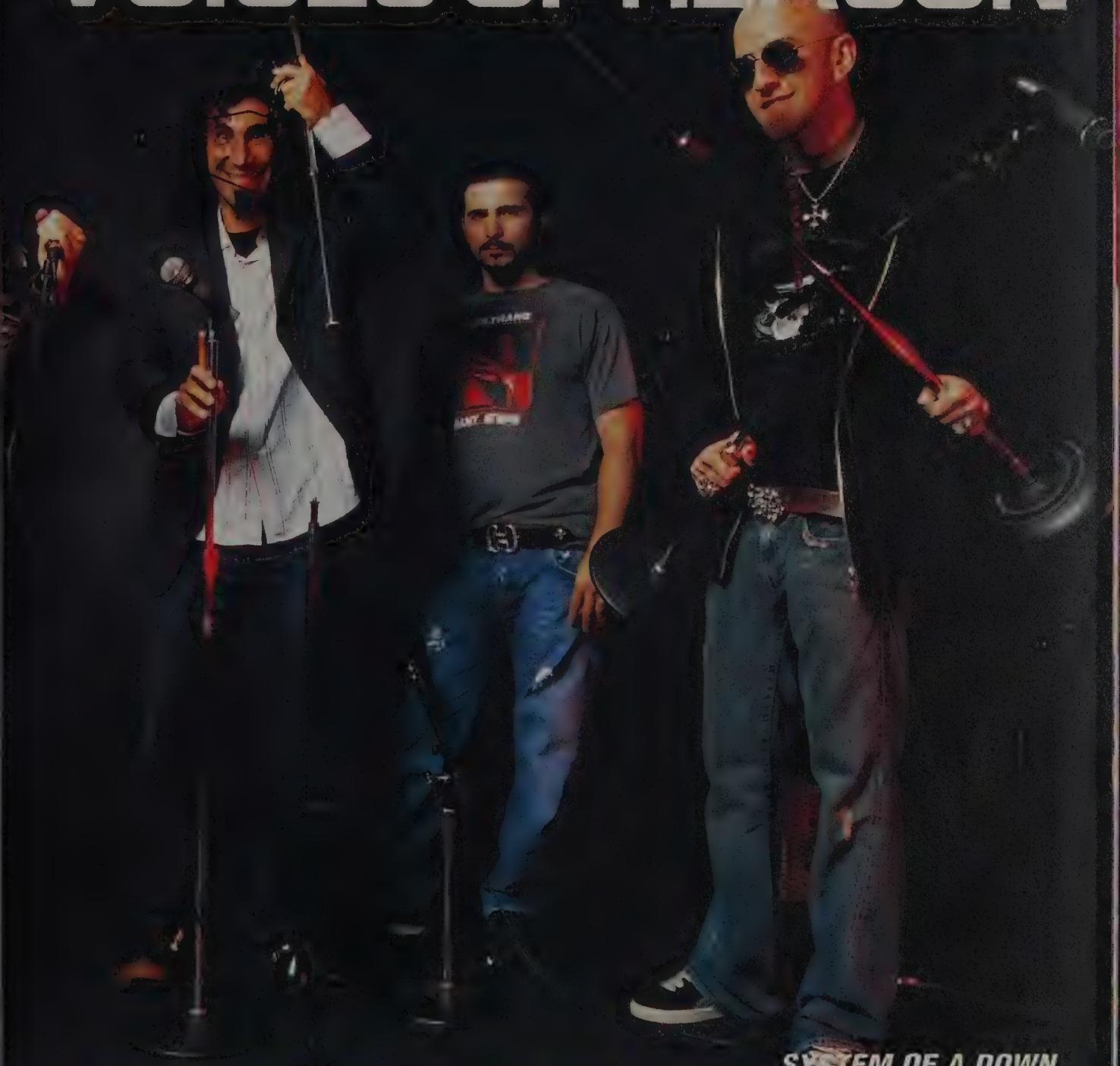


Album, they were treated more like B-sides. I want to correct that; I never felt like they were B-side songs. That happens to be one of my favorite albums of the previous three.

HP: Are **Mezmerize/Hypnotise** an evolution, and if so, how?

ST: That's something that people are going to have to decide for themselves. I think how we've evolved is that John's come up amazingly as a drummer: he's gotten a lot tighter, his legs are a lot tighter and faster, his playing, his touches...

VOICES OF REASON



SYSTEM OF A DOWN

"For us, a good album happens when the proper synergy is there."

everything. Each member has come up in their own way in what they do for the band. Daron has been bringing in more lyrics than before. I've been doing more keyboards and string arrangements.

JD: Serj, you have more of a range in my opinion. He was an amazing singer the years of touring with **Toxicity**, but he's much more so now; he can do more with his voice. He's more powerful without having to push as hard. He can

communicate more easily, with more energy.

HP: Does the whole process of being in a successful band get easier as time goes on?

ST: Going into it, you have a better idea of what you're going to do; however, not everything depends upon you. You're not exclusive leaders, you have a whole team around you, producers, record label and whatnot, so it's a working game. I wish that sometimes things were easier

than they are. Sometimes the bureaucracy makes it take a lot longer. We would have wanted this record out six months ago, and certain things just lagged. We were really excited about washing our hands from the rehearsing and recording process and just touring.

HP: Rumor has it you'll be spending two years on the road?

JD: Hopefully... if we survive.

PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO

SYSTEM OF A DOWN PRIDE, PASSION & PURPOSE

BY ROB ANDREWS

When System of a Down's latest disc, **Mezmerize**, shot out of the box back in June, selling nearly half-a-million copies during the first week of availability, few within the rock world were caught by surprise. After all it had long been speculated that the disc would rocket this Armenian/American unit back to the very apex of contemporary music power—a place where they had previously visited with such albums as **System of a Down** and **Toxicity**. Yet while the incredible response afforded **Mezmerize** may not have shocked close followers of the hard rock scene, it did serve as a major wake-up call for vocalist Serj Tankian, bassist Shavo Odadjian, guitarist Daron Malakian and drummer John Dolmayan. They had hoped for the best, even *prayed* for the best in regard to their latest creation. But despite all of the accolades that this politically-laced unit has garnered over the last decade, the success enjoyed by their new disc came as both a surprise... and a relief. Now as they launch their biggest tour ever in support of their latest disc, we sat down with the band to discuss SOAD's incredible ride to the top of the rock and roll world.

Hit Parader: Your tour has sold out. **Mezmerize** made a Number One chart debut. Is this the best time in the band's career?

Serj Tankian: It's certainly one of the most exciting and rewarding times. When you work as hard as we did on creating the music that fills this album, it's truly something special when people seem to embrace it as warmly as they have. I think my reaction to finding out the album had made a Number One debut was a mix of shock and surprise.

Daron Malakian: It's all part of completing the next cycle for us. We write, we record, and then we go on the road... in this case for the next two years! You have to look at each step in the process on its own or you run the risk of becoming overwhelmed.

HP: It seems like you've slowly been working the new songs into the live set.

DM: That's true. It's easy to put the new songs in... but it's really hard to take the old ones out. Those songs are part of you—and part of this band's history. But just like when you write and record, a live show has to display your evolution as well. That's why as the tour goes along, I know we'll be adding more and more of the new songs because the fans will be familiar with them by then. It would be wrong to go out there when the album is first released and hit them with a dozen new songs. It wouldn't be fair. By the last stages of this tour maybe it will be fair to do that.

ST: Getting as many new songs as possible into the set is something that I believe we all eagerly anticipate. These songs are all close to our hearts at the moment since we've spent the last few months bringing them to life. But it's also exciting for us to have new material to play on stage. Some of the older songs—even the ones that are the most popular with the fans—can get a little tired for us after performing them hundreds of times. Having so many great new songs to choose from really invigorates us as a band.

John Dolmayan: What we enjoy is discovering which of the new songs the fans best react to. There are certain songs that we feel are more album cuts, things that won't translate that well on stage. But when we play them, the reaction is sometimes overwhelming. Conversely, things that we're excited to play don't go over as well. It's a trial and error method that's always full of surprises. A few months into the tour you begin to settle down a bit and realize which songs are working best. It's a very interesting experience for us.

HP: Has this tour given you the opportunity to play certain songs that you've always wanted to play live?

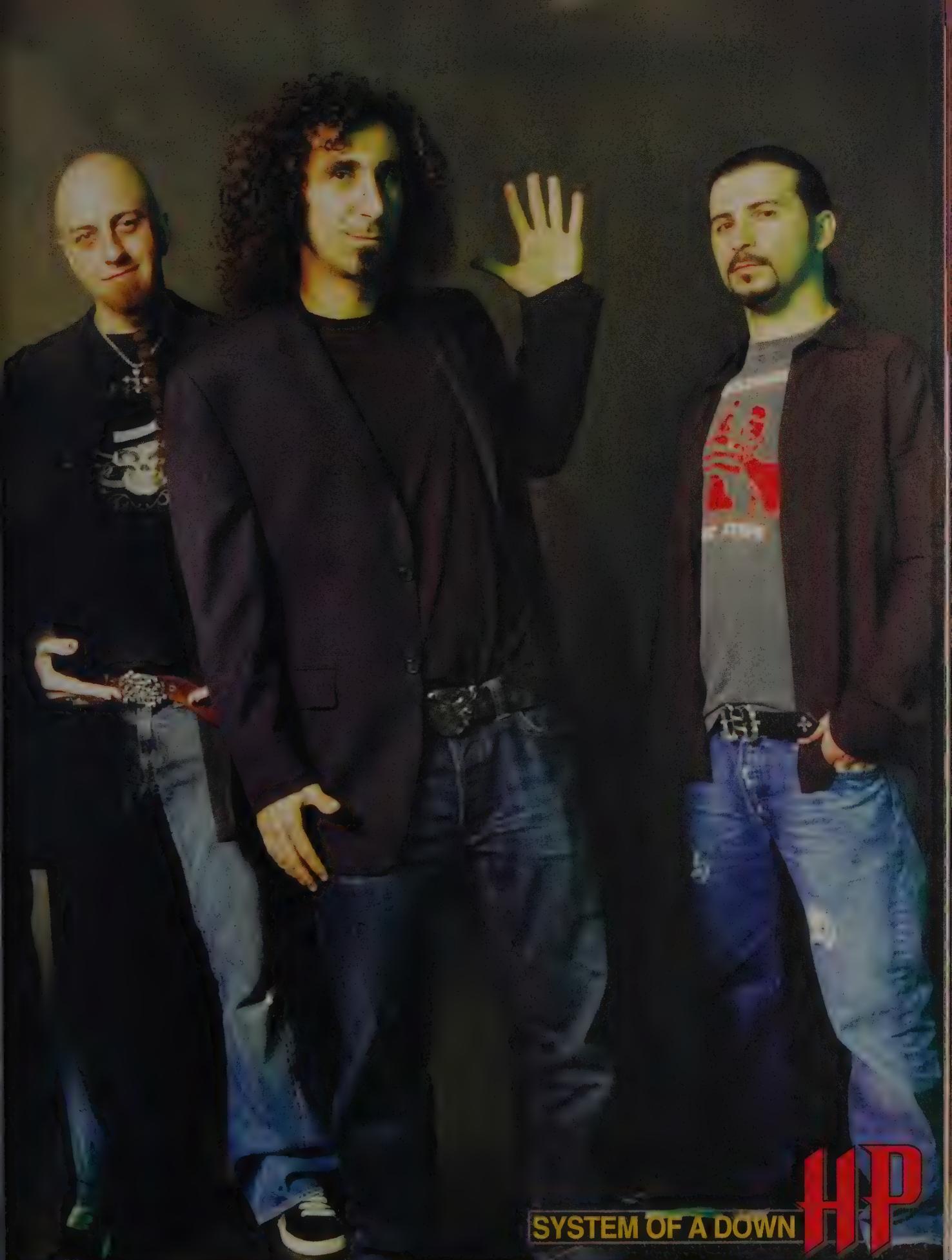
JD: Absolutely. Even when we had just one album out we couldn't play everything we wanted because back then we'd most often get 30 minutes on stage. By the time **Toxicity** came out, we already had a problem regarding set lengths and which songs to leave out. Not it's almost impossible for us to decide. There are so many songs that deserve to be heard. Maybe we'll just have to play a four hour set every night so that we can get in everything we want!

ST: We want to play songs on this tour that we've never played before. And we want to try and create songs on stage each night. We enjoy the concept of jamming and seeing how we can get back to where we started. That's a cool way to make sure that every show, every night is something totally unique and totally special. Our fans deserve nothing less.

HP: It seems like the band is a little more light-hearted these days—which was reflected on a number of **Mezmerize** songs.

DM: I don't think that's really true. We've always had a lot of humor in our songs, but for whatever reason, people have usually tended to gravitate more towards our political material. But if the humor of these songs is being noticed, then I'm very happy. That's such a big





SYSTEM OF A DOWN **HP**



HP

SERJ TANKIAN

element of what we do that I sometimes get very frustrated when it's ignored. A lot of fans expect a certain sound and a certain lyrical perspective from us, and when they're asked to listen and respond to something else it sometimes isn't that easy for them. Thankfully, they've shown a willingness to do that with this album.

Shavo Odadjian: It's all about growing as a band and allowing different elements of your style emerge. It's very important that we always continue to evolve.

HP: As you look back on the recording of *Mezmerize*—as well as the soon-to-be-released *Hypnotize*—how do you view your creative evolution?

ST: It's actually a rather interesting process for each of us. We all get so caught up in each individual song, and just making it work, that you tend not to have a true perspective on the band's growth. It's true that only after you've done your work and can sit back and listen to what you've created as a whole can you begin to get a sense of accomplishment. That's when you can see where you've been, and hopefully sense where you're going as a band.

DM: A lot of it has to do with the vibe I'm looking for and the band is looking for. I don't want to push anything down their throats. Thankfully, when I bring songs in to be listened to the rest of the band tends to be highly receptive and very honest in their appraisals. If there's something that they don't particularly like they'll speak up about it... but it doesn't happen very often.

JD: You can get so easily intimidated if you look at the body of work in front of you and consider it as a whole. When Daron brings us songs, he tends to do it in bunches. We may have had as many as 100 songs to consider at some point in this recording process. But you can't look at that as a whole or you'd probably become totally intimidated.

You have

"We write, we record, and then we go on the road... in this case for the next two years!"

to take each song individually and take it from there.

SO: Daron is an amazing songwriter, and since we've all been together so long and we know each other so well as people, he seems to be able to speak for all of us. When we hear his songs, we're all very excited because not only are they so amazing, but they represent what each of us would want that song to sound like.

HP: On a personal level, what are you most proud about on this album?

DM: We didn't want to lose our identity on these albums, but we didn't want them to sound like anything we've ever done before. If you try to change too much, you can lose everything you've created. It's so important that we stick to our roots because we're very proud of them. But on the other hand, I don't want to get stuck on those roots. I want to always keep adding things and changing things to what we do. I want our past success to serve as a foundation for what we're doing now.

JD: This may be a bit strange for a drummer to say, but the thing I'm most proud about this time are the vocal harmonies we achieved. I've always

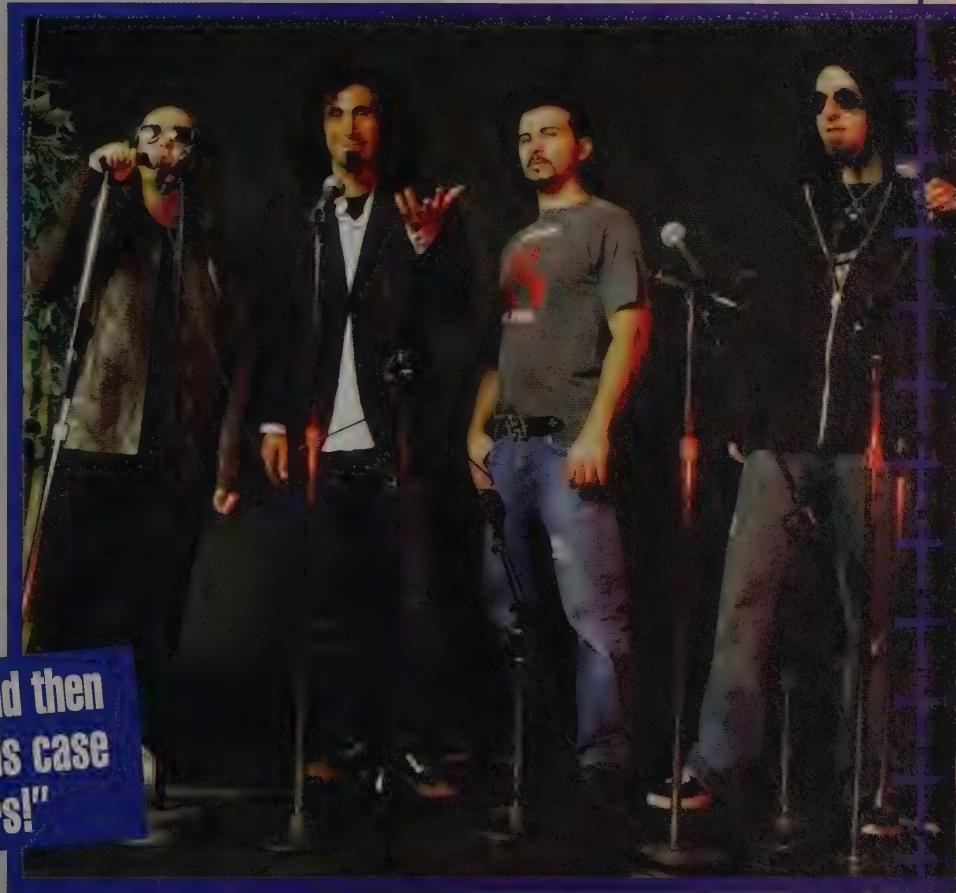
been a huge fan of the Beatles, and in that band you had four mediocre talents individually, but when you brought them together they were a true juggernaut. I think there's something of a parallel on this album.

ST: We worked on those vocal parts very hard in rehearsal, along with just about everything else that you hear on the album. We don't particularly like leaving anything to chance. We have so much to consider once we get into the studio in terms of attaining the kind of sounds we want that it's vital for us to work out many of the basics—such as vocal harmonies—even before we begin.

one of the most successful bands in the world?

DM: That's probably the last thing on my mind. When I'm hidden away somewhere writing a song, or stuck in the studio for hours-on-end working on getting just the right sound, being a Rock Star isn't even a consideration. You're just another hard working guy.

ST: In all honesty, I don't even think about it. Being a star—or being treated like a star—has never been a priority to any of us. We didn't begin this band with the aspirations of becoming rich and famous. It was about having our music heard. That's still what motivates us.



HP: This is such a diverse collection. System has been renowned for their political stances over the years. Do you feel your message is as strong this time?

JD: It's there, just as it always is. But we've never tried to hit you over the head with everything we believe. It's mixed in there with material that has no political agenda at all. There are some very funny songs on this album that have absolutely no message other than what you hear. I know that some people may try to delve in and give those songs some extra meaning, but I can assure you that they're not there.

ST: There are many issues that are so important to us. They change almost every day. We feel a need to address those issues and make sure that the world—and especially America—focuses on them properly. But you can't express everything you want on an album. Music, like life, is an ever-changing medium, and we need to possess the flexibility to respond to its demands.

HP: How do each of you handle being members of

SO: The best part is being recognized occasionally on the street and having a fan tell you how much they love the music.

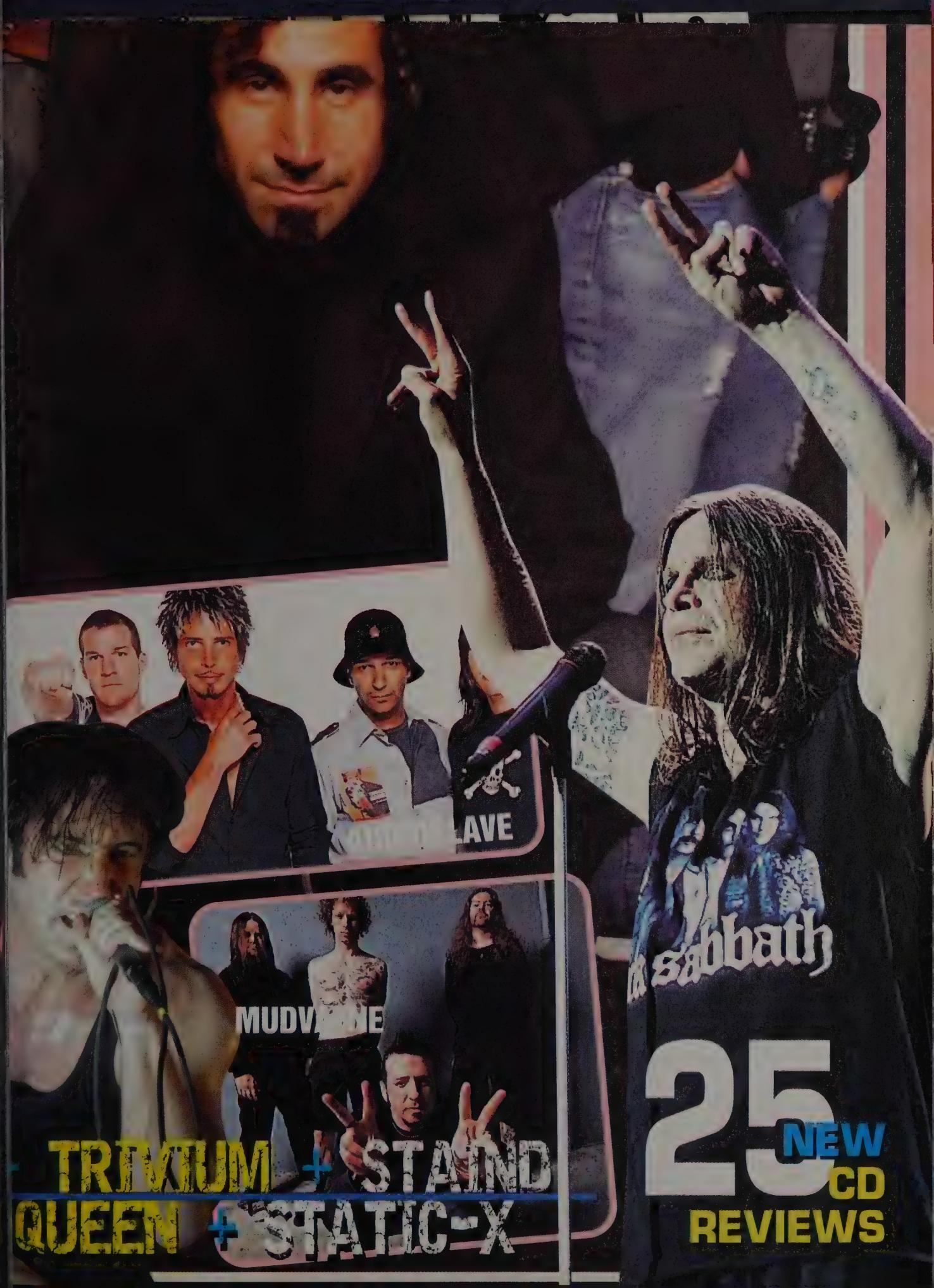
JD: You can't listen to the accolades that are given you. Your focus must always remain on the music. If you don't keep your focus there, you're no longer grounded. You loose your focus, and once you do that, you risk losing your entire identity. I feel it's safe to say at this point in our careers that such a fate isn't about to befall any of us.

HP: Do you ever fear that the band's outspoken political beliefs will usurp your musical impact?

JD: It's something we've grown to accept over the years... even if we don't particularly like it. It seems a lot easier for some people to deal with a band like ours when they feel like they can easily classify us and categorize us. Well, we're not that easy to categorize. But it does seem as if calling us a "political band" is the current trend, and that's something that we may break away from with these albums. There is still plenty of political opinion being expressed, but there's also a great deal of humor and compassion.



SYSTEM OF A DOWN



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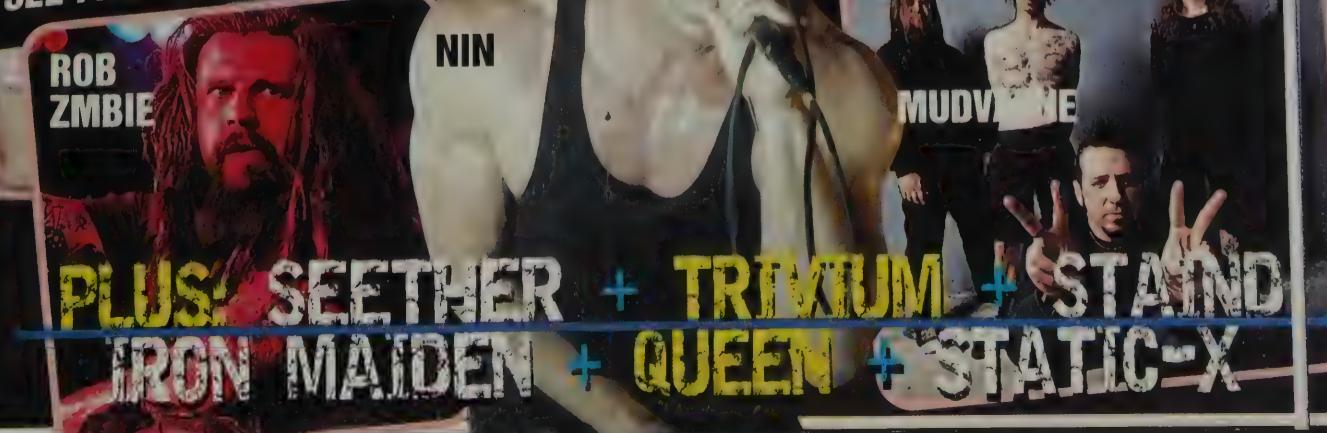
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PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO

"Only a few people at our label were left from before."

The last year hasn't been the easiest period in the history of Staind. Despite all of the success that has come their way over the last decade—including three multi-platinum albums—and the degree of personal contentment that these rockers currently enjoy, just prior to the release of their latest album, **Chapter V**, a number of professional roadblocks emerged that had the net effect of slowing down the forward progress made by vocalist Aaron Lewis, guitarist Mike Mushok, bassist Johnny April and drummer Jon Wysocki. It was in mid-2004 when their long-standing record label was absorbed into a larger firm, making these platinum-selling Big Fish, somewhat smaller stock in their new-found musical "pond." Then rumors started to abound early this year that forces at that label weren't yet totally satisfied by the contents of the group's new album, and requested the band to keep working in the studio.

"There have been a lot of changes at the label, no question about that," Mushok said. "Maybe only two or three people we know are now left from before. It's a very strange feeling. But for the moment at least, our focus is on making the best album we can and then letting the label do what they need to do in order to support it. We have no reason to believe they can't do it. But what's happened at Elektra seems to be indicative of what's happening throughout the music industry. A great deal of it is in a state of flux."

The net result of all this has served to cast this Springfield, MA-based quartet into somewhat uncharted territory. As the face of the hard rock world quickly shifts around them—for the most part away from the angst-filled, down-at-the-mouth sounds that are Staind's primary calling card—this unit find themselves sitting and waiting for response to their new disc to pour in. It's not a familiar position for this highly acclaimed unit. After all, Staind is one of the most successful hard rock bands of the 21st Century. They have sold a combined total in excess of 15 million copies of such albums as **Tormented**, **Dysfunction**, **Break the Cycle** and **14 Shades of Grey**. The duality of their approach—where hard rocking hits have been followed by even more successful acoustic interludes—have marked them as one of the most diverse bands of their era. But as **Chapter V** begins to impact upon an anxiously-awaiting world, it seems as if there's more pressure than ever resting upon Staind's broad musical shoulders.

"There's no question that we still feel just as much pressure as ever," Mushok said. "I think you need that in order to make great music. You have to feel that you're being pushed by yourself, by your bandmates, by the fans, by outside forces in order to keep trying to do something new and different. That's what motivated a

lot of the music in the new album. One of the other big differences is that we worked together in the studio more than we had in the past. On the more recent albums we'd kind of show up when we were needed. It wasn't that we weren't interested in what everyone else was doing, it was more that we were busy on our own with writing or taking care of other necessary business. But on this album, we were determined to all try to be there for as much of the recording process as possible."

there. It was great to be able to drive home after work each day."

The comforts of home did little to deprive Staind of the gut-wrenching lyrical and musical drive that has powered each and every one of their albums. This time around, working with noted producer David Bottrill at the production helm, the band managed to tap into an even deeper and more probing emotional space, with the resulting songs displaying the musical evolution that has marked each and every one of their previous releases. Once again, on

STAIND

A NEW CHAPTER

BY ROB ANDREWS

So exactly what is the status of Staind's long-awaited new album? According to the band, they expect to have the disc out by mid-summer. But the fact of the matter is that while they've been a bit frustrated by the unexpected delays cast at their feet, the members of Staind aren't particularly upset over the manner in which the release of their new album has been handled. They know that the people around them want it to be a success just as much as they do. And with the shifting tides of hard rock tastes being markedly different in 2005 than they were, say, in 1999, all involved seem to acknowledge that a little extra effort has been required in order to insure Staind's return to platinum-selling paradise.

"Sometimes you need to have things shaken up a little bit," Mushok said. "The biggest risk a lot of bands run is in allowing themselves to become complacent and fall into a creative rut. You grow comfortable and that can take the edge off of the music you're creating. We shifted quite a few things around for this album. We changed producers, and we also changed where we were recording. We began in this beautiful studio in upstate New York, and then we shifted to our own rehearsal space in Massachusetts. We built some special areas to make Aaron's vocal work a little easier, and we took everything from

Chapter V the Staind gang has effectively managed to blend their hard rocking fury with a heaping helping of acoustic tenderness, with, according to Mushok, the resulting musical melange representing some of their most satisfying work ever.

"We wanted to try really pushing ourselves with these songs, and I believe we have," the guitarist said. "And another important factor was that we had a new producer, David Bottrill, who presented certain challenges to us. That's one of the reasons that we approached this album from more of a 'team' perspective. We thought it was very important for us all to be there to make sure that we all understood what we wanted to accomplish. David works a little differently from Josh Abraham, who produced our previous two albums. And we felt a certain compulsion to be there throughout the entire process of making this disc."

"Musically, this has proven to be a very satisfying album," he added. "We feel that way because you want to maintain that diversity and make sure that fans who like your heavy side, as well as fans who've enjoyed your hits, are satisfied. It's a delicate balancing act at times, but Aaron tends to write brilliant acoustic songs, and I tend to write the heavier ones. We have that natural balance in the band which makes things work very well."



STAINLESS

The members of Trivium all hover around the age of 20. No, your eyes are not deceiving you: Lead singer/guitarist Matt Heafy is 19 years old. Guitarist Corey Beaulieu is 21. These are kids just out of high school, who've gone from the classroom to something much bigger and more worldly than college. They've traded notebooks for a tour rider, and are on their way to become learned scholars of heavy metal, and life on the road. While many kids have no idea what they want to do after receiving their high school diploma, the kids in Trivium knew they wanted to make a go of it in a heavy metal band *before* they even entered the learning institution known as high school. But their passion, drive and determination go way beyond being another in a long line of "next big thing" heavy metal bands. Trivium want to be the next Metallica; they want to dominate the metal scene and to work their way up to playing arenas.

Armed with an impenetrable work ethic, Heafy and company are poised to assume the heavy metal throne with *Ascendancy*, their major label debut. Plump with galloping guitar solos, clean vs. brutal vocals, and complicated, lengthy song structures, Trivium have Metallica's career arc in their sights. As the band geared up for their Ozzfest 2005 Second Stage debut, Heafy spoke to *Hit Parader* about how his youth is a blessing, and how Trivium wants to own the ears of all metalheads worldwide.

Hit Parader: All roads lead to "Metallica" on *Ascendancy*. While it's not out and out Metallica worship, the influence is undeniable. And all rock critics are hailing you as Metallica's heirs. Where did this come from?

We're musically reminiscent of the band. They were a proficient band back in the day, and our riffs our reminiscent of theirs.

HP: How do you think Metallica would feel about your music? Would James and Lars give it a thumbs up or down? I'm hoping they'd get into it. I think they'd think that we're heavy, and see the influence we've taken from them. They would like it, though.

HP: Is Metallica one of your fave bands? Yes, definitely. *Master Of Puppets* is my favorite Metallica album.

HP: At least you know your metal roots. You are 19 years old, though. Is the road and the music business kicking you in the ass or are you loving it?

At times, it stressful, but it's better than any other thing I can possibly do. I can handle it better than people twice my age. The one thing that's starting to get on my nerves is when people say that we're lucky or that they are envious of us being so lucky, but this was never about luck. We worked our asses off, I

have worked my ass off since I was 12 years old to achieve this. I have actually had people say, "I hate you; I wish I could be where you are. It's not fair." It's not fair? I've worked for this, so how is that unfair?

HP: It's just the little green monster of jealousy rearing its ugly head. You recently had van problems, something

"We know we're reminiscent of Metallica... it's cool."

every touring band faces, which caused you to nearly miss your first headlining New York gig. To boot, your record label is based in NYC, and everyone was going to be there, watching your performance. You had to fly in from the Midwest to make that show happen. How was that, in the end?

It was the worst day of our life, but in the end, the show was the best. We're

driving and dealing with the bull of trying to get from the Midwest to New York City with all our van problems. It was like a movie... a horror movie. But at least this horror movie had a happy ending.

HP: What made you decide that you want this lifestyle, and what keeps you doing it, because it gets tough, even on the most mentally prepared individual?

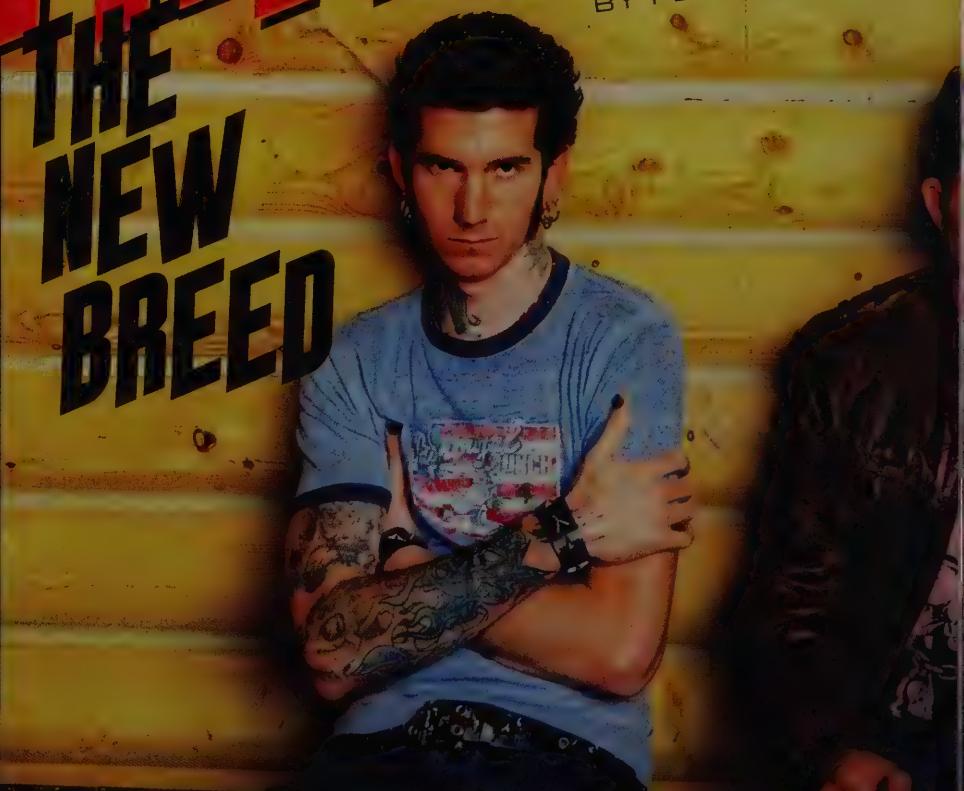
Look at how big

Metallica is, and all the great times they had as a band, and to all the masses they played in front of. That's what made me want this. It's hard work. What we're doing now, any struggles that we endure will make it better for the future. Scraping by now in the van will make us appreciate it more, when we're in a bus.

TRIVIUM

THE NEW BREED

BY PETE MORGAN



Everything is hard and an uphill battle right now, but we work for the goal, and when the goal is achieved, it will be better in the long run.

HP: You sure are goal oriented, and you have your stuff together. What is the ultimate goal for Trivium?

To be the biggest band in rock, or in metal, that we can possibly be. We want to influence generations and generations of people in the future.

HP: Those are some big dreams! It's inspiring. So, why would a young metal fan like Trivium? Why should he/she buy *Ascendancy*?

We're twice as determined as most of our peers. We were 13 years old when we said we wanted to do this. What bands say they want to do this when they are that young? It's rare. We talk about it. We're more determined, and have been for a long time, because we had the benefit of starting at such a young age.

HP: Do you ever feel you've had to grow up so fast?

It's not too fast because it's what I want. Everything has always been fast in my life. I'm ready for it. I can handle it.

HP: Your confidence - where does it come from?

My dad. He has been the biggest teacher in my life.

HP: Is it true that you're not an original member of Trivium?

It's not that I am not, but Trivium

existed for about a week before I joined. Travis [Smith, drums] saw me perform *Self-Esteem* by The Offspring in a grade school talent show, and asked me to join the band. They kicked out the guitarist, and when I joined, I was just playing guitar. The original singer was around for two months before I took over as singer.

HP: If you weren't doing this, what would you be doing? Or is it unimaginable for you to do anything else?

I'd probably be in school, not having a good time. [Laughs]

HP: Are your parents supportive of your rock and roll lifestyle?

Totally. They go to my shows, and they help me out with everything I could possibly need, with instruments and moral support, and financial support and caring.

HP: Describe *Ascendancy* as though I had never heard it?

It's classic and modern. It's speed metal, thrash metal. It has solos, and it's dual harmonized. It's also catchy, aggressive, fast, angry, and melodic. It has all the makings of a classic metal album.

HP: What can we expect from your next album?

It's going to be ten times as technical, with more solos, and it's going to be so technical and shreddy it's going to hurt. It's going to be ridiculous.

HP: Is it going to hurt to play it or hurt to listen to it?

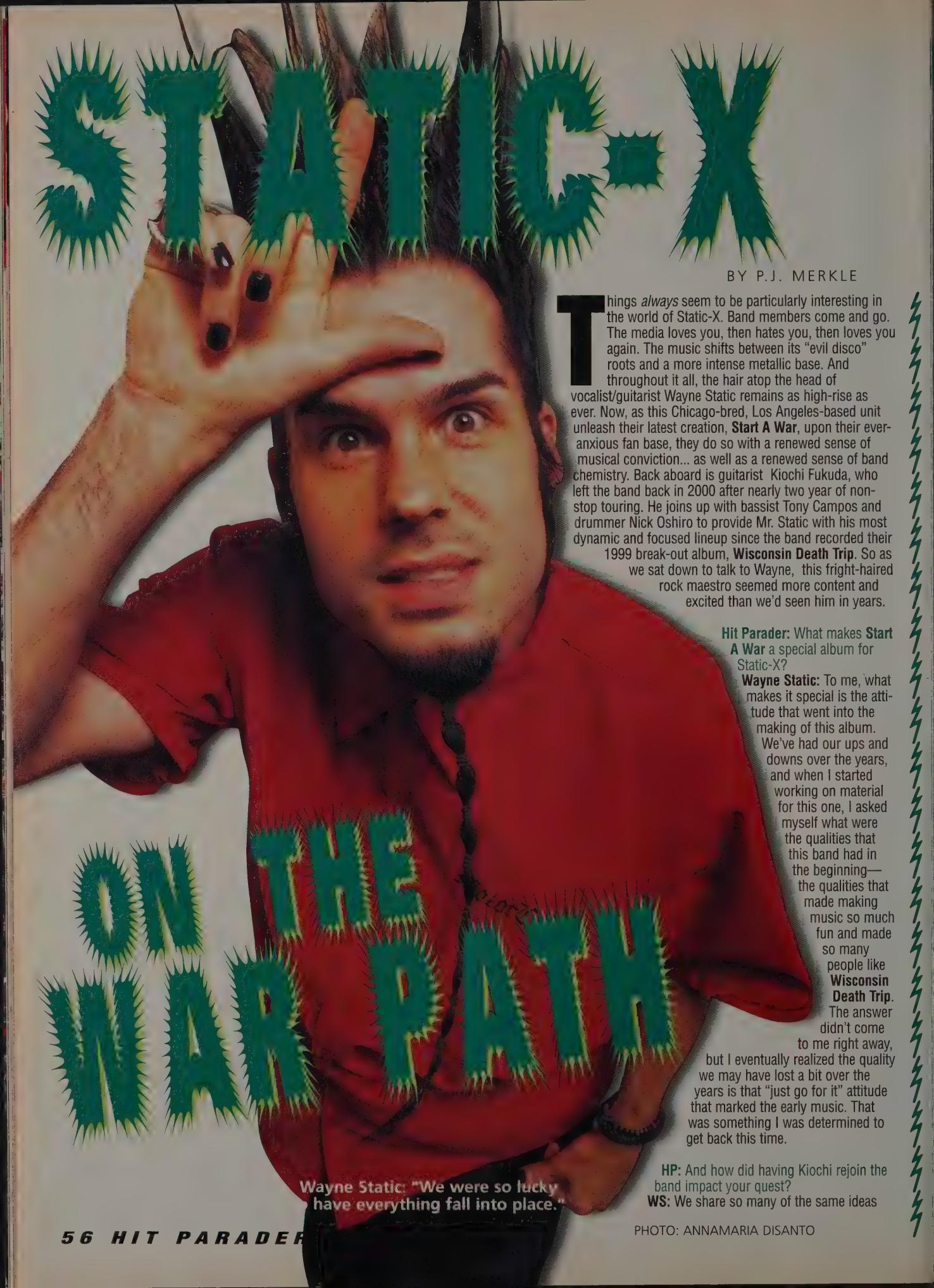
To play and listen to!

[Laughs].

We want people to ask themselves, "How did they do that?" when they listen to our next record.

HP: Lastly, what are you looking forward to most about Ozzfest?

Playing in front of a massive amount of people every single day, in front of a fixed amount of large crowds, and seeing Iron Maiden every single night. But the exposure will be great. We can't wait!



BY P.J. MERKLE

Things always seem to be particularly interesting in the world of Static-X. Band members come and go. The media loves you, then hates you, then loves you again. The music shifts between its "evil disco" roots and a more intense metallic base. And throughout it all, the hair atop the head of vocalist/guitarist Wayne Static remains as high-rise as ever. Now, as this Chicago-bred, Los Angeles-based unit unleash their latest creation, **Start A War**, upon their ever-anxious fan base, they do so with a renewed sense of musical conviction... as well as a renewed sense of band chemistry. Back aboard is guitarist Kiochi Fukuda, who left the band back in 2000 after nearly two years of non-stop touring. He joins up with bassist Tony Campos and drummer Nick Oshiro to provide Mr. Static with his most dynamic and focused lineup since the band recorded their 1999 break-out album, **Wisconsin Death Trip**. So as we sat down to talk to Wayne, this fright-haired rock maestro seemed more content and excited than we'd seen him in years.

Hit Parader: What makes **Start A War** a special album for Static-X?

Wayne Static: To me, what makes it special is the attitude that went into the making of this album. We've had our ups and downs over the years, and when I started working on material for this one, I asked myself what were the qualities that this band had in the beginning—the qualities that made making music so much fun and made so many people like **Wisconsin Death Trip**.

The answer didn't come to me right away, but I eventually realized the quality we may have lost a bit over the years is that "just go for it" attitude that marked the early music. That was something I was determined to get back this time.

HP: And how did having Kiochi rejoin the band impact your quest?

WS: We share so many of the same ideas

Wayne Static: "We were so lucky to have everything fall into place."

PHOTO: ANNAMARIA DISANTO

"I was determined to regain the 'go for it' attitude we had early on."

and interests. And he likes to have fun making music as much as I do. Having him back in the band helped create the exact kind of atmosphere I was looking for. The goal with **Start A War** was to get together the people who had made the first album such a fun experience—including the producer of that album, Ulrich Wild—and then just let it happen. We weren't necessarily trying to recapture the musical style of **Wisconsin Death Trip**; it was much more of a quest to recapture the whole creative atmosphere that surrounded that album.

HP: How did you and Kiochi make contact again?

WS: It had been a few years since we had talked... way back in 2000 to be exact. He just was burnt out from touring so much, and he wanted to spend more time with his family. That's cool, I understood what he was going through. But one day last summer it just hit me that I missed him and wanted to know what he was up to. So I called him up and he told me about some of the things he was doing, especially with programming. After hearing that, I was intrigued and I invited him to come down and check out what we were doing. As soon as we hooked up, he started working on some of the programming for the album, and then when things started to go bad for Tripp, it was amazing that he was there and ready to step in as our guitarist again.

HP: What exactly happened with your previous guitarist, Tripp Eisen?

WS: Wow, it's kind of tough to talk about. Let's just say that Tripp allegedly found himself in some situations that surprised all of us. We wish him the best, but we had to move on. We're just very thankful that Kiochi was available, and that it worked out so well for us. Having him back in the band gets Static-X back to being the group we always wanted to be.

HP: How do you see the band changing from album to album?

WS: It definitely is a evolutionary process. Just a couple of years ago—right before we made our last album, **Shadow Zone**—I went back and listened to the earlier albums, and I thought that a lot of the material sounded very immature. Now I listen to that same material and I realize that it was full of fun and energy. That's just the way it is. There are certainly elements of the previous three albums in this music, but we've taken it way beyond any place we've been before. I can say without hesitation that this is by-far the best collection of songs we've ever put together.

HP: You've gotten back to "screaming" a bit more on this album.

WS: (Laughing) Yeah, that's true. On **Shadow Zone** I made a very conscious decision to try to use a much 'cleaner' vocal style, which worked with the kind of music that was on that album. I have nothing against that because I enjoyed it and I think I pulled it off very well. But I realized that I missed some of the screaming that went on earlier, and since we're now six years and four albums into our recording career I figured it was time to make the best use of everything I had learned during that time. There's still some 'clean' singing on **Start A War**, but there's plenty of screaming as well.

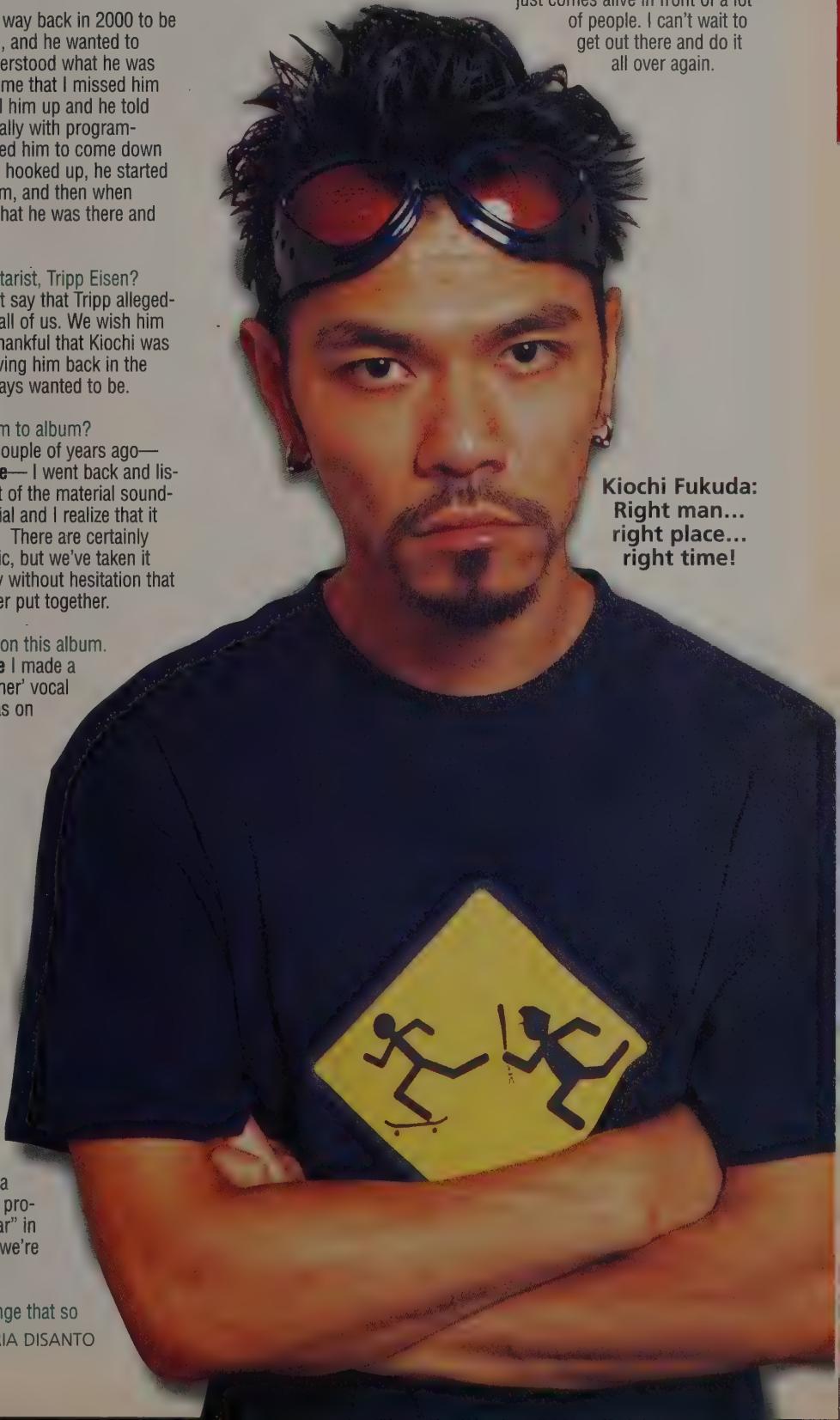
HP: What's the significance of the title **Start A War**?

WS: Well, first off, it has *nothing* to do with politics. We're not trying to comment on any situation that this nation may find itself in at the current time. It has to do with the music and a lot of the themes that run through the songs. There is a song on the album called *Start A War* that's about some people in this business who I thought were my friends—and they proved to be anything but! They started a war with me, and that wasn't cool! And in some ways it's about a war between musical styles—we're utilizing more programming and keyboards on this album which "war" in a good way with the guitars and heavy music that we're best known for.

HP: As you look around, does it strike you as strange that so

many of your fellow New Metal compatriots of the early 21st Century have seemingly disappeared?

WS: It is kind of strange. But it's very satisfying to me to know that we've survived and that we're making some of the best music of our lives. It's great in that we're one of those bands that still loves to get on the road and just keep going and going. I look forward to that every time we complete an album, and this time is certainly no exception. Being able to tour as we do—and being a pretty good live band—is what made us successful in the first place. The music just comes alive in front of a lot of people. I can't wait to get out there and do it all over again.



Kiochi Fukuda:
Right man...
right place...
right time!

IRON MAIDEN

POWER PACKED

BY LEE TILLINGHAST

Few bands in heavy metal history have continually elicited the kind of immediate and overwhelming response afforded Iron Maiden. Just mentioning the Maiden moniker to their ever-loyal legion of followers is sufficient to send that fan-base into fits of near hysterics, as their fist-pumping, war-whooping reactions are often enough to make old ladies cringe and family pets scurry under the couch. It's now been that way for 25 years, during which time the Maiden Metal Machine has cranked out a series of legendary albums and created mass musical mayhem upon concert stages from Bangkok to Boston to Brazil... and back again.

As they celebrate their latest run through the hard rock world with their co-starring role in this summer's Ozzfest and the impending release of their next album (now scheduled to emerge sometime in the fall), there can be little doubt that vocalist Bruce

"There's a great desire all over the world to hear the music Maiden plays."

Dickinson, bassist Steve Harris, drummer Nicko McBrain, guitarist Dave Murray, guitarist Adrian Smith and guitarist Janeck Gers have once again proven they are masters of the metal domain. Indeed, with fellow legends Black Sabbath once again on the road, and with a reunited Judas Priest back in prime working order, it seems that in mid-2005, a revival of "classic" British bands has taken place within the heavy metal world. For their part, Maiden seem to be quite pleased to be part of it!

"It goes to prove something that we've always believed," Harris said. "That great music—especially great rock music—is timeless. It's great to be touring with a band like Sabbath who had a significant impact upon us when we were first coming along, and who have helped open the doors for so many young heavy metal bands from England. Now to be on the road with them is an incredible experience for us... and we hope, an incredible experience for the fans, as well."

Anyone fortunate enough to have heard Maiden on their most recent concert go-

round can readily attest to the fact that the group has rarely sounded better. But amid the glut of "new metal," "alterna-metal" and "shock rock" currently inhabiting the upper echelons of the contemporary music world, a key question emerges. Why do so many people still care about Iron Maiden and the brand of full-throttle, take-no-prisoners metal that they present? As hard as it may be for some "new age" hard rock aficionados to comprehend, it seems that the pedal-to-the-metal style favored by Maiden and their ilk remains at the very cornerstone of the rock empire. And let's not for one moment forget that over the last 25 years Maiden has sold over 50 million copies of such classics discs as *Number Of The Beast*, *Powerslave* and *Piece Of Mind*, making this unit one of the most successful hard rock units of all-time.

"It's an exciting time for all of us," Dickinson said. "I think we all sense that there's a great desire all over the world to hear the kind of music Maiden plays. Even in the States—where they can be a bit fickle at times—the music is making a great resurgence. This year, both as part of *Ozzfest* and on our own, we're experiencing the full brunt of that excitement."

So where does all of this leave Iron Maiden in 2005? Certainly the beginning of their latest tour and the soon-to-be released next disc rank among the most significant happenings on the year's hard rock schedule. Certainly, we all must acknowledge the on-going appeal that this vintage unit still holds for millions of fans around the globe. Evidence of that notion can be seen in the overwhelming success of the band's recent *Early Years* DVD, a collection that has already proven to be one of that form's most successful metal titles. And, in addition, sales for Maiden's back catalog of albums still moves an impressive million units per year world-wide.

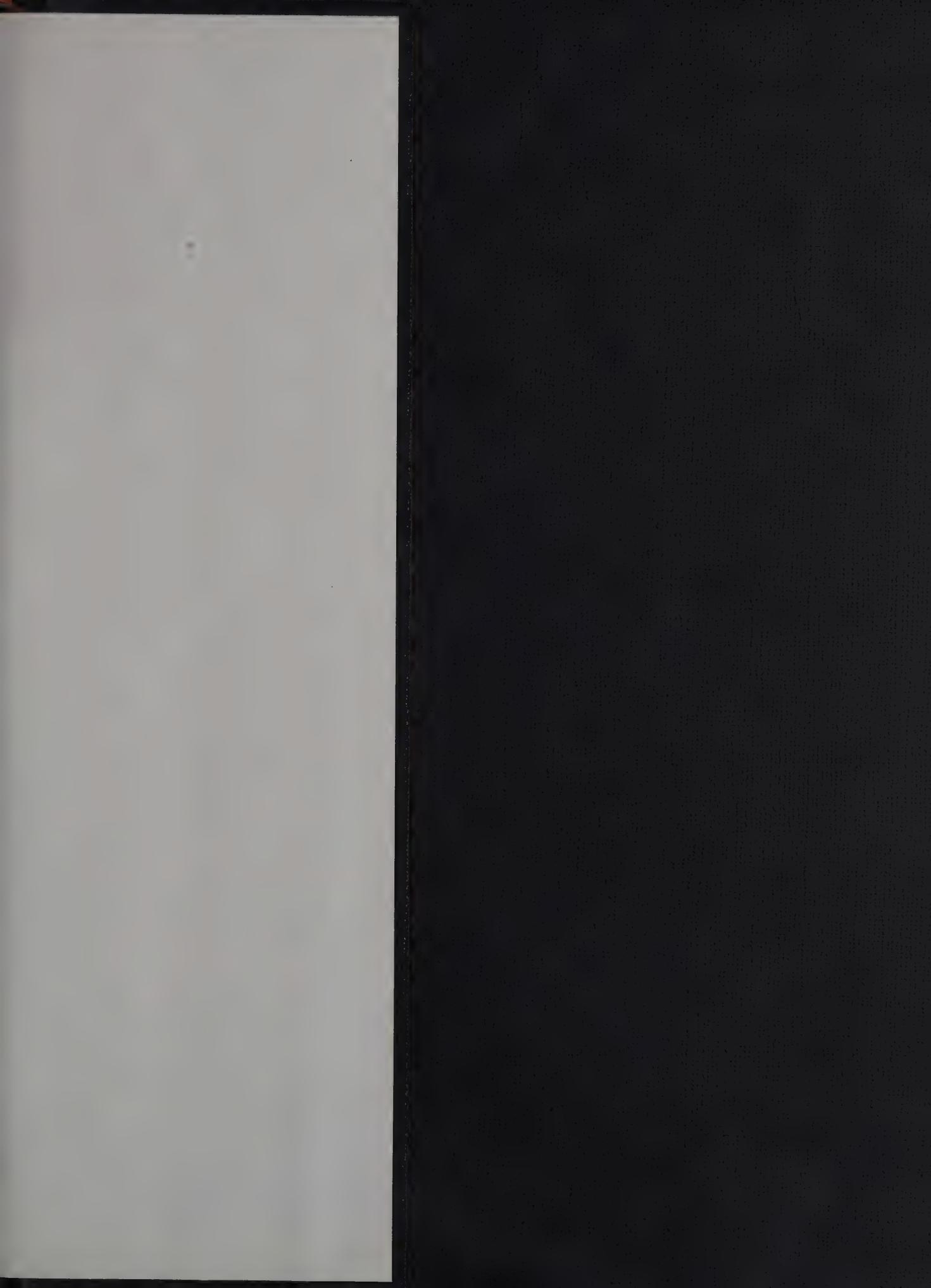
Still, with Maiden's brand of time-tested metal just now beginning to emerge out of the commercial black hole it's been forced to live in over the last few years (especially in America), and younger, hungrier bands such as Lamb of God and Shadows Fall currently giving the hard rock form a much-needed

kick in the ass, where does a band with two-and-a-half decades of experience fit into the hip-hoppin', jive-talkin', big-riffin' hard rock scene of the 21st Century? Well, according to Dickinson, perhaps they don't want to fit in at all.

"Look," he said with a slight smile. "We do what we do, and we do it very well. That's really all there is to it. We're not trying to compete with many of the young bands that are out there. I admire many of them, and I think the ways that some of them have begun to incorporate new ideas into the hard rock framework is absolutely brilliant, but that's not what we're about. We're competing against our own legacy, and trying to add to that legacy as best we can."

It seems safe to say that with their one-hour *Ozzfest* show drawing fresh-blood State-side attention Maiden's way, interest in this hallowed unit has rarely been higher. Still one of the biggest live draws around the world (the group recently completed a sold out European tour where nearly a quarter of a million tickets were gobbled up hours after their official release) it seems safe to say that Maiden's next headlining U.S. tour will be upon us by year's end. Indeed, their Fest road excursion is only the precursor of what is soon to come our way! It is then, as excited fans pack concert halls from coast-to-coast, and teen-aged kids start showing up in school with the band's hideous mascot "Eddie" plastered to their T-shirted chests, that fans will undoubtedly step forward ready to show their renewed support for what is unquestionably one of the most potent and talented heavy metal bands of all time.

"There's no denying that we came along at just the right time back in the '80s," the vocalist said. "But we also offered a lot back. Luck can only carry you so far. That's when talent and determination take over. There were many bands that fell by the wayside during those times. Who knows why some very good bands didn't manage to leave any sort of lasting mark? The fact is that only a few of those groups managed to prevail and prosper—and Maiden was clearly one of them. We're very proud of that fact. It takes a special quality to know how to survive, and that's one quality I believe we still possess."





A black and white photograph of the British heavy metal band Iron Maiden. The band consists of six members: Steve Harris (drums), Paul Di'Anno (vocals), Dennis Stratton (guitar), Adrian Smith (guitar), Nicko McBrain (drums), and Bruce Dickinson (vocals). They are posed in a row, looking directly at the camera. Steve Harris is on the far left, wearing a dark jacket with white stripes on the sleeves. Paul Di'Anno is in the center, wearing a denim vest over a t-shirt. The other four members are on the right, all wearing dark leather jackets. The background is a dark, textured wall.

IRON MAIDEN

HP

THE EDGE

HARD ROCK'S NEW STARS

BY AMY SCIARRETTO

THE RED CHORD

The Red Chord frontman Guy Kozowyk is a bit surprised. He's surprised by how much the 'kids'—that's the record buying, concert attending contingent—like his band. Not because the band's music is lowbrow or low rent or *not* worth listening to. Because it's definitely a complicated, fully abrasive band that's more than worth listening to, thanks to the grindcore-death metal blend that TRC have concocted and patented on their Metal Blade debut, **Clients**. Attend any TRC show and you'll see limbs flailing, bodies flying, fingers pointing, fans singing along, and kids moshing like there's no tomorrow. A TRC show is a war zone, no doubt.

"Literally, the song *Dreaming In Dog Years* [from *Fused Together In Revolving Doors*] was written about my dog, and kids are beating each other up, moshing hard, with their anger faces on, and all this testosterone is coming out," the singer says. "And yet all I do is sing about my beloved canine. There's so much anger. I say, 'Take your shirt off and hug a dude!' 90% of our fanbase and groupies are angry dudes."

Kozowyk's tongue is planted in his cheek with those statements, but we must say, when you make music that's masculine enough to cause hair to grow on Pamela Anderson's chest, it's not surprising that your fans are mostly of the male persuasion. The individual members that make up The Red Chord collective maintain sarcastic senses of humor amidst the serious bluster of their music. Yes, they admittedly like to make fart jokes, but they take their music as seriously as a case of head lice.

"This is a heavier record," Kozowyk says regarding **Clients**, an album that tells stories about people from all different walks of life that

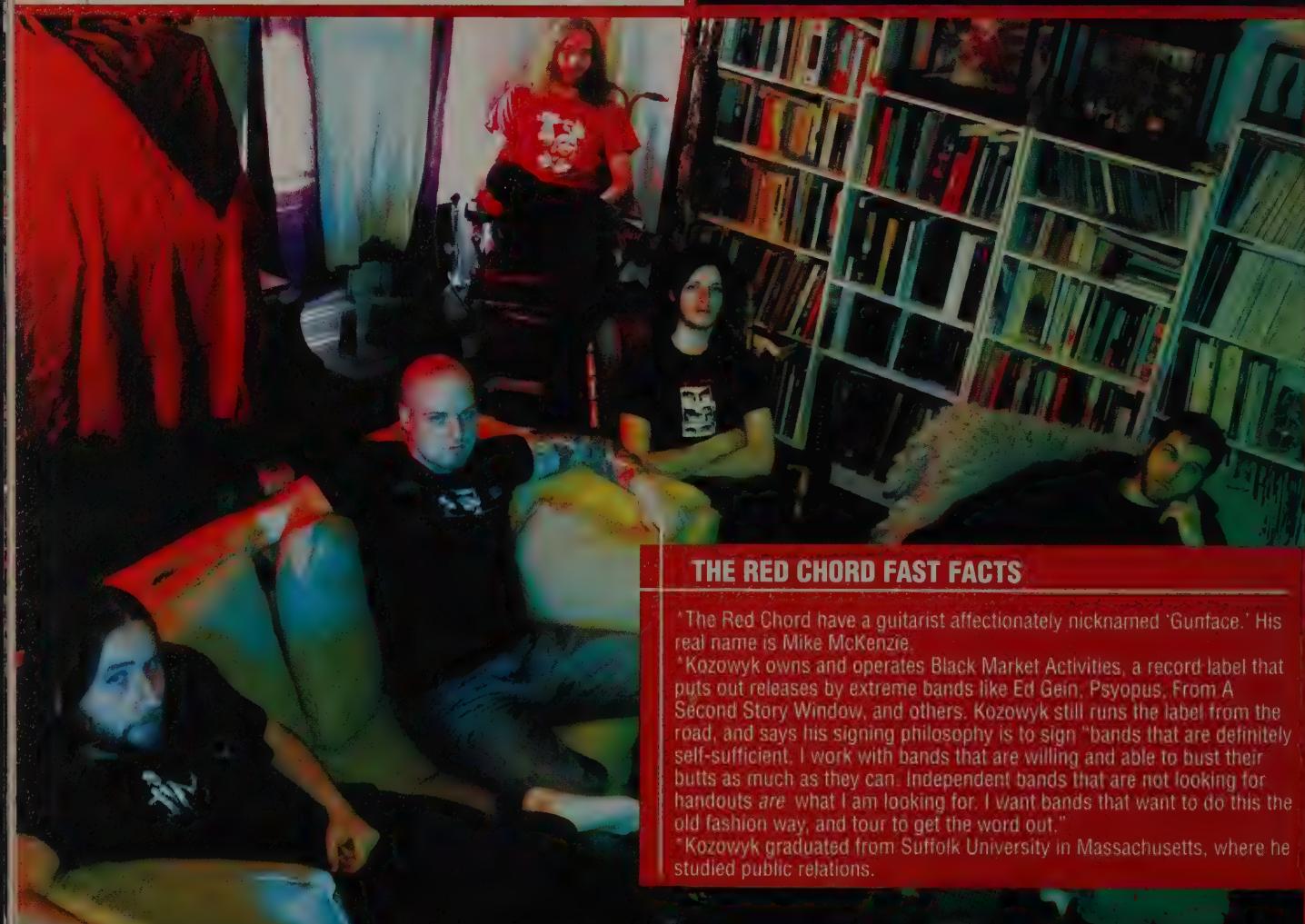
Kozowyk has observed in his time as a clerk at a pharmacy/lottery store/convenience/liquor mart on the outskirts of Boston. "There is more groove, but because there is more overall groove, it's not straightforward. We use a high vocal, then a low vocal, and there's lots of blasting, but then we go back into a hardcore riff. Sure, it seems more straightforward, but there's so much blasting on the record. Blast for blast, there's more blasting on this disc." Yes, The Red Chord are a band that takes their blast beating seriously.

Lyrical, **Clients** offers open-ended slices of life, stories told about various people with different mental and physical handicaps. In no way is The Red Chord poking fun at these subjects; in fact, they are taking a close, hard look at some forgotten members of society and immortalizing them in songs. "Every song is about a different person," Kozowyk admits. "Some are made up and some are based on real people. There is a lot of imagination, with me writing about where people came from, and who they are. It's a social statement representing the social outcasts."

So, after you are done banging your head and moshing to the fury of **Clients**, dive into the lyrics and immerse yourself in the story.

OBITUARY

Florida-based death metal band Obituary were one of the most influential bands of the early '90s Death Metal Renaissance. While most death metal bands of this period were built for speed, Obituary stood out, because they crafted a slower, groovier sound, and eschewed genre trappings like blood 'n guts lyrics in favor of more apocalyptic, realistic themes. But Obituary seemingly disappeared off the heavy metal radar in the late '90s. There was no official announcement or



THE RED CHORD FAST FACTS

*The Red Chord have a guitarist affectionately nicknamed 'Gunface.' His real name is Mike McKenzie.

*Kozowyk owns and operates Black Market Activities, a record label that puts out releases by extreme bands like Ed Gein, Psypus, From A Second Story Window, and others. Kozowyk still runs the label from the road, and says his signing philosophy is to sign "bands that are definitely self-sufficient. I work with bands that are willing and able to bust their butts as much as they can. Independent bands that are not looking for handouts are what I am looking for. I want bands that want to do this the old fashion way, and tour to get the word out."

*Kozowyk graduated from Suffolk University in Massachusetts, where he studied public relations.



OBITUARY FAST FACTS

- *Obituary used to be called Xecutioner when they first started out.
- *Guitarist Trevor Peres has another band called Catastrophic. He's also an amateur dirt track racer.
- *Guitarist Allen West was in Six Feet Under.

press release, no final tour, no nothing. The band's status remained ambiguous and questionable, and no one knew what to make of it.

All of this non-information was intentional. The individuals who made up the Obituary collective needed to take time off, figure out who they were, and explore other options and areas in life. After a half-decade hiatus, Obituary are (natch!) back from the dead, although they never really broke up.

"Some were more anxious than others," says singer John Tardy, who is known for his trademark, non-standard death metal growl. "The timing was just right to get back into this band." The 'reunion' talk began after Tardy and bassist Frank Watkins performed a medley of songs on stage at Ozzfest with Andrew W.K. back in 2002. This might seem an odd pairing — classic death metal dudes playing with party anthem animal Andrew W.K.? But it's not the anomaly you might think it is. Turns out, Obituary drummer (and Tardy's younger brother) Donald Tardy was playing with Andrew W.K. at that time.

This event helped spark a renewed interest in resurrecting the band. But any time a band goes away for a long period of time, there's always the risk that fans have moved on, and that it might be hard to attract a new audience, since the landscape and scene are always ch-ch-changing.

"I hope people care," says Tardy, from his home in Florida. "But to be honest, when we did our first record, we didn't care. It was done for us, only. We didn't have plans to tour or doing another record when it first came out. Roadrunner came to us, and everything that happened in the 15 years after was because we did what we liked. I hope people will care, and I think it'll offer more to people than just straight death metal kids." Indeed, the new album, which will be issued by their long-time label Roadrunner, is slow, groove-oriented death metal, and it will

appeal to fans of Hatebreed, Slayer, and Six Feet Under, to name a few.

"People that like Hatebreed and Slipknot, if we could get them to listen to us one time, [our music] would be something that they would be interested in," the singer says. "A lot of our fans from way back when will want to listen to this record, and the ones that were too young to get out and see us are now old enough to come out to shows. We hope to tap into other band's fans that might not traditionally go look for a death metal record."

BACKYARD BABIES

Hard rock music experienced a Swedish invasion in the '00s, namely with the Hives and the Vines in the alternative scene. However, heavy metal, in general, has always been slathered with a thick coating of Swedish bands, from Entombed to the Haunted to In Flames, and many many more. Sweden's status as a prime exporter of quality rock music can never be questioned. And it's time for you to get hipped to the Backyard Babies.

Like Velvet Revolver? Then wait till you get a load of the Backyard Babies. These Swedish louts, who've been together for 15 years with the same line up, play hedonistic, sweaty rock that likes to make enemies and flip the bird, and they fall somewhere between Poison, Guns N' Roses, the Ramones and AC/DC on the rock scale. The Babies have just released *Tinnitus* — the technical term for that annoying ringing sound you get in your ears after seeing a really loud rock concert — which is a compilation featuring 4 tracks from each of the band's last 3 records.

Guitarist Dregen, whose probably broken thousands of guitar strings throughout the course of his career, says, "You will get a great hint on what Backyard Babies is all about. It's energy and great songs. We're



BACKYARD BABIES FAST FACTS

*The Backyard Babies formed all the way back in 1989. They did their first U.S. tour with Social Distortion back in 1997. They also toured with AC/DC for 6 weeks in Europe.

*One of the members of BYB survived the tsunami that leveled Thailand during December 2004.

*The band won Swedish Grammy Awards in both 1998 and 2001.

*Three members of BYB claim to be educated welders.

the missing link between Kiss and The Ramones."

Those are big words but Backyard Babies back it up on record. Dregen describes his music as appealing to all sorts of rock fans because "it's irresistible, straight, honest and timeless." Timeless is definitely an accurate term when it comes to this music; you could put on songs like *Brand New Hate* and *U.F.O. Romeo* at any point and time and they feel like straight ahead rock tunes that could have come from any period in rock music's history. Not a lot of bands are capable of making that type of music, but the Babies do it and do it well. "All of us grew up in the same little town in Sweden and went to the same school, and we started the band in 1989 and it's been the same 4 guys since then" Dregen explains about the band's unique chemistry. As a testament to why the band has been able to stick together as a unit after all these years, the guitarist says, "We shared the same interest in punk rock and heavy metal music."

If their music is any indication, the Backyard Babies are all about having a good time. In fact, while on tour last year in Europe, Dregen hijacked a taxicab and got caught, claiming it was "the most expensive

taxis ride ever!" While that might not have been the brightest move, it shows that the Backyard Babies are about the here and the now, about making music that feels good all over, with little regard to responsibility and consequence. Isn't that what rock 'n roll is all about? We think so.

INTO THE MOAT

Into The Moat's debut, *The Design*, might be too hard for the average listener to comprehend and digest. It's technical, spastic music.

"I do think that it's difficult to listen to," says 21-year-old drummer Matt Grossman. "But people listen to bands like us for different reasons. I play music, and I can pick out different parts in technical bands. But I remember hearing stuff like Dillinger Escape Plan and being so confused, but I am doing a similar thing in my band. But non-musicians will hear our music and like it because it sounds crazy, and they like that. People have said they like to work out to our music."

Well, *The Design* is certainly a soundtrack for working off the excess pounds, and firming and toning the muscles. Into The Moat hail from the hot springs of South Florida, in a Fort Lauderdale suburb called

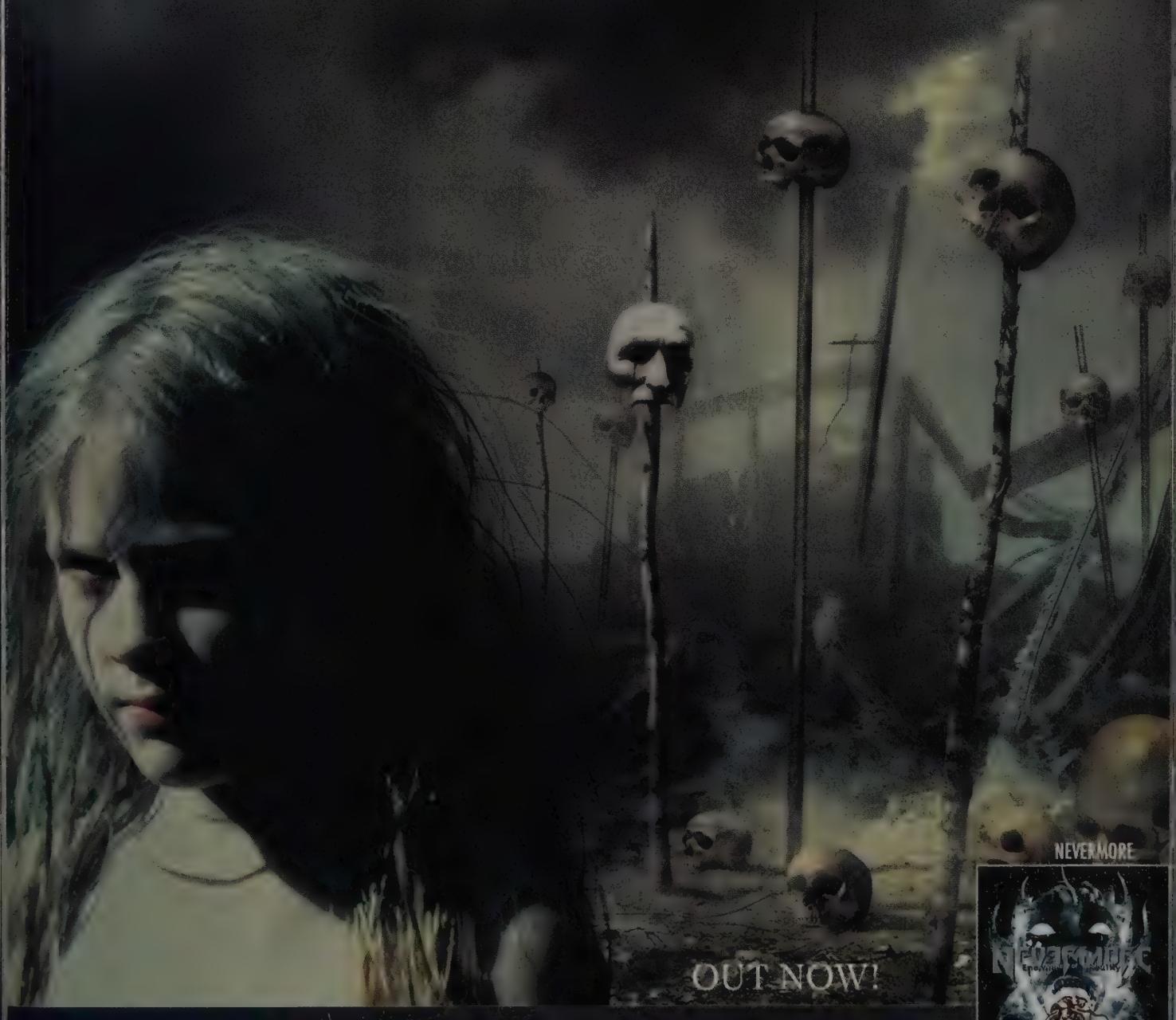
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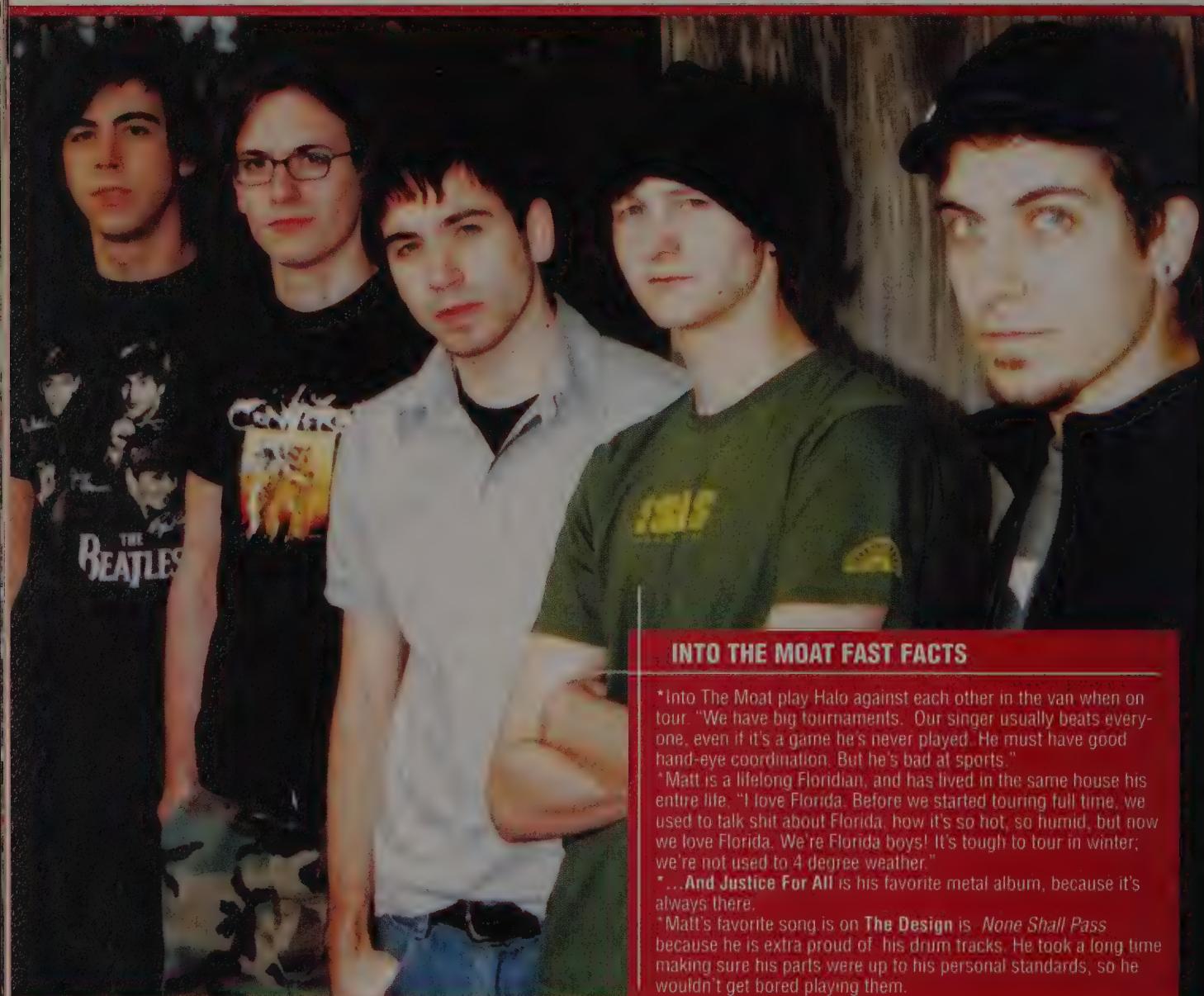


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INTO THE MOAT FAST FACTS

* Into The Moat play Halo against each other in the van when on tour. "We have big tournaments. Our singer usually beats everyone, even if it's a game he's never played. He must have good hand-eye coordination. But he's bad at sports."

* Matt is a lifelong Floridian, and has lived in the same house his entire life. "I love Florida. Before we started touring full time, we used to talk shit about Florida, how it's so hot, so humid, but now we love Florida. We're Florida boys! It's tough to tour in winter; we're not used to 4-degree weather."

* ...And Justice For All is his favorite metal album, because it's always there.

* Matt's favorite song is on *The Design* is *None Shall Pass* because he is extra proud of his drum tracks. He took a long time making sure his parts were up to his personal standards, so he wouldn't get bored playing them.

Cooper City and they're used to the comparisons to like-minded bands Dillinger Escape Plan and The End, and they don't mind the comparisons, especially since the DEP are like royalty in this genre. "It's flattering," says Grossman. "I am flattered by the fact that someone would compare us to the best band in our genre, ever. We've gotten so used to it. But we have our own sound."

That's true. *The Design* is high tech. "The song compositions are complex and progressive, and the riffs don't repeat, but there's also an element of hardcore to it. You can mosh to it," says Grossman, effectively encapsulating his band's sound in under 100 words.

Seeing Into The Moat's strange name made us think they would sound like a *Dungeons & Dragons* type, nerdy power metal band before we popped the disc in our CD player. But we were quickly proven wrong. "I am sure people do think that, and that's cool. I used to hate our name. I despised it when we chose it. It was originally a joke, but it happened to stick, but that's the coolest part about the band. Because

people probably have a different expectation of the band and we shatter that." Grossman admits that the band's name came from *The Christopher Lowell Show*, a decorating program on the Discovery channel. Apparently, Grossman put the TV on mute, and said, "The first thing that comes out of his mouth will be the name of our band. And our band name is what he said! I had no idea what he was talking about, but we took it."

Being such a brand new band, Into The Moat have learned that support is the one thing a new band needs. In copious doses. "The hardest part was lack of funding. It's difficult to get out there and tour without any real support. It's hard to keep a job when you're trying to go on tour. We happen to be lucky to get signed to a big label early on. We wouldn't be anywhere without their help. Same goes for my parents, because they have supported us and helped us out along the way. I think it's impossible for bands to get anywhere without someone's parents being really supportive."

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In retrospect, how appropriate it is that one of Black Sabbath's most memorable discs features the title **Never Say Die**. As this timeless British metal warhorse has proven time and time again, Sabbath is the beast that can truly never die... much to the delight of guitarist Tony Iommi. You see, each and every time Sabbath completes one of their historic "reunion" tour runs, Iommi fears that it may be the last time he ever gets to play such Sabbath chestnuts as *War Pigs*, *Iron Man* and *Paranoid* in front of an appreciative audience. But seemingly just as the mustachioed six-string legend begins to fret about the fate of the band that he's helmed for more than 35 years, the phone inevitably rings, and the distinctive voice of Sharon Osbourne is on the other end, asking if Tony would be interested in touring with her husband Ozzy once again.

That is the good side—and the bad side—of Iommi's current status with Sabbath. He is the sole member of this hallowed heavy metal institution who has survived all the ebbs and flows that have characterized this unit's incredible history. But these days he finds his fate, and the fate of Sabbath, in the hands of others—most notably Ozzy and Sharon. Dating back all the way to this group's initial reformation in 2000, it was agreed by all that Iommi would never again "sully" the Sab reputation by playing Sabbath music with anyone other than that unit's Original Lineup—vocalist Ozzy, bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward. And while he still occasionally bemoans having others dictate the status of his musical "child", as the reunited Sabbath head out once again to headline **Ozzfest 2005**, Iommi knows in his heart-of-hearts that he made the right decision—the *only* decision—when it came to handing over Sabbath's reins of control.

"What was I to do?" he asked good-naturedly. "I would do just about anything to keep Sabbath going, and having Ozzy back in the band took everything to a level I couldn't have imagined just a few years earlier. It's been an incredible ride, though not always knowing what might happen next can drive you to distraction at times. I was quite concerned as we toured in 2004 because I wasn't hearing much from Sharon about what might be next on our agenda. But by tour's end, everything appeared to be quite positive."

And that up-beat attitude was enough to inspire Iommi to keep his future Sabbath desires flying high. Of course he'd love to get back into the recording studio with Ozzy and the boys at least one more time to create their first album together in over 15 years. Perhaps that is never to be. But Iommi understands that each day he keeps Sabbath alive, is another great day for heavy metal music. More than anyone else in and around the Sab camp, Iommi's greatest wish has always been to maintain the group's musical light burning brightly. And even when he's involved with other musical projects (as he currently is with former Deep Purple vocalist/bassist Glenn Hughes), it is clear that after more than three-and-a-half decades of living and breathing Black Sabbath, that band is never far from Iommi's thoughts.

"I am somewhat optimistic that there will be a future for Sabbath after this tour," he said. "There were times in the recent past when I

really didn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Ozzy didn't seem to be into it, and I just didn't know if we would ever be able to get Sabbath going again. But at the end of the last **Ozzfest**, we all had a very nice chat, and it seemed as if everyone was very happy and quite committed to continuing on in some capacity in the future. Now that we're doing it again in 2005, I see no reason why that can't be carried to the next step."

Ahhh... the Next Step. While Iommi won't come right out and say it, in his mind that step invariably would involve going into the recording studio with the reunited Sabbath gang. Make no mistake about it, this unit has tried walking this path before—most notably back in 2002 when they spent the better part of two months writing and recording—with the

BLACK SABBATH THE LEGACY CONTINUES

"I would do just about anything to keep Sabbath going."

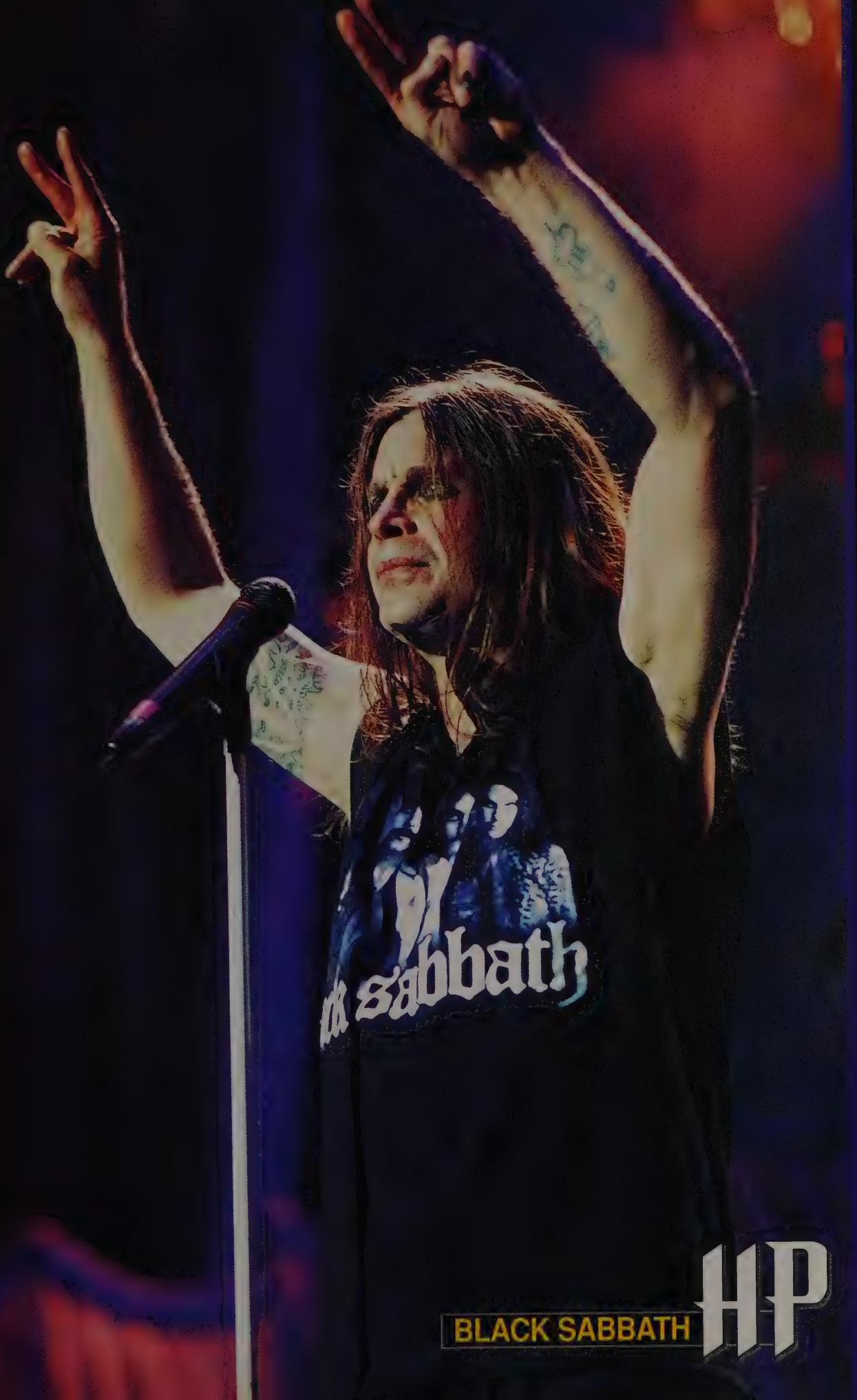
BY ERIC NASH

net result being two rather mediocre tracks that made it onto their live **Reunion** double CD package. But Iommi believes that with the proper time and focus (especially on Ozzy's part) the band could produce something superlative—a disc that could add another glowing page to the Sabbath history book. Yet for all his desires and intentions, Iommi still isn't sure if the opportunity to record with his life-long musical cohorts will ever arise again.

"I'm not the one with the final say on that matter," Iommi explained. "But I would think at this point making a new album is almost a necessity. We can't keep going out there and just play *War Pigs* and *Iron Man* every time. I'm sure those songs will still be there as a key element of our set, but they must be augmented but something new. That's the way I feel about it, and I think the rest of the guys are beginning to share my sentiment. It wouldn't take us that long to get material for a new album together. Geezer, Bill and I could go in and do the album, and then bring Ozzy in for a few days just to do his vocals. It would be just like the old days! (Laughs)"

Thankfully not *everything* around Sabbath is like it was in the "old days", back in the '70s when Sabbath ruled the metal roost with wall-shaking riffs and an unsteady off-stage relationship. Back then Iommi and Osbourne didn't always get along famously, and the guitarist is the first to applaud the greatly improved status of their on and off stage relationship. He realizes now that he and the Ozz are like brothers—albeit siblings that don't always share the same perspectives on life, business or day-to-day existence. But thanks to Sharon's steady guiding hand, it appears as if the Tony/Ozzy relationship is closer than it's been in years. And that fact alone provides Iommi with a never-ending well of hope when it comes to considering Sabbath's future.

"Ozzy is probably healthier and happier than I've seen him in years," Iommi said. "Taking him off that medication has done wonders. He is physically much better, and his whole outlook is much brighter. There isn't as much talk of death any more—in the past that seemed to be one of Ozzy's preoccupations. Now he was actually talking about the future—a very nice change."



Black Sabbath

BLACK SABBATH

HP

THE EXIES



The Exie:
Big-time
bound!

ON THE RISE

The Exies have heard it all during their brief time in the spotlight. Following crowd-pleasing road stints opening for the likes of Velvet Revolver and Motley Crue, vocalist/guitarist Scott Stevens, guitarist David Walsh, bassist Freddy Herrera and drummer Dennis Wolfe have heard how they're one of the bright young lights of the hard rock empire. And from those who have perhaps too critically analyzed the contents of their latest disc, *Head for the Door*—especially that album's break-out single, *Ugly*—they've

heard how this L.A.-based melodic metal unit is little more than the latest "Nirvana-wanna" outfit to hit the hard rock scene. But, as the old saying goes, as long as they're talking about you good things can happen, and that's exactly how the Exies (whose name derives from an old John Lennon comment about "existentialists") have handled the flood of media-generated hype that has recently come their way. Recently we caught up with the band during a sold-out West Coast club tour to learn some of the "secrets" behind the Exies' fast-rising success story.

Hit Parader: What are some of the best things that have happened for the band since *Ugly* emerged as a hit?

Scott Stevens: I think the best thing has probably been the kind of reaction we've gotten from fans at every show we've played. It hasn't mattered if we've been out with a major headliner in an arena or in a club environment, the fans have really embraced us and made us feel welcome. You don't know how great it makes you feel to know that at least some of the people out there have heard of you and your music—and that

they like it.

Freddy Herrera: And better yet, the number of people who are responding has been growing every night. We just finished a tour with Breaking Benjamin, and their album has just gone platinum. And while they can be a bit heavier than us at times, their fans really took to us and supported us. That was just incredibly rewarding.

HP: With a song on the radio, and a series of major tours, do you feel as if you've now "made it"?

David Walsh: That's such a relative term. It's different for every band. We're very pleased by the progress we've made over the last few months, but we're the first to acknowledge that there's still a long way to go. We're still the opening act, and we're still a band that's struggling to get their music heard. Thanks to our recent road experiences, we've experienced what it's like for bands like Velvet Revolver and Motley Crue and even Breaking Benjamin. We're certainly not there... yet! **Dennis Wolfe:** We've "made it" in that we

feel that we belong on the road with those bands. So it's all a matter of perspective. When you look at where you've come from, and at a lot of the bands that you've passed along the way, then there is a feeling of accomplishment. But when you get to spend time with legendary performers and incredible bands, you realize that you're still kinda at Square One. But at least we're in the game!

SS: The whole experience we're going through is awesome! Just being on the road with a band like Motley Crue has been an incredibly exciting experience for us. They were the Kings, and in a lot of ways, they still are. They dominated a decade, and how many bands can ever say that? Just being out there and being part of that, and getting to hang out with them a bit has been incredible. And anyway, my mom thinks I look a little like Nikki Sixx. One of the coolest things to me is that I know Nikki personally selected us to be on the tour because he heard our CD and thought it was heavy, and cool and it rocked.

HP: After having *Ugly* open doors for you, how did you decide what the follow-up single would be?

SS: That was a very tough call for

who wanted *Splinter* or *What You Deserve* because it's so important for us to establish ourselves as a hard rock band. That's what we are, and if you come with a ballad too soon you run the risk of having the fans who jumped aboard with *Ugly* jump right back off again. But on the other hand, if the ballad is the song that's going to bring you cross-over success and really open things up for you in a big way, how can you *not* release it?

DW: The big concern for a band in our position is that you're not sure

"We're very pleased with the progress we've made over the last few months."

How many more singles and videos the label will get behind from this album. The success of *Ugly* earned us a second one. What if we don't get a third? Do you go with the song that has the greatest potential to become a big hit, or do you keep trying to establish a fan base? Those are the kinds of questions that keep you up at night.

HP: One of the primary points of comparison for the band has been with Nirvana. How do you feel about that?

DW: We don't hear about it or read about it as much as some fans or people in the media might think. We're not oblivious, but at the



Freddie Herrera

young band has their points of comparison and their influences, and if that's what people want to hear when they listen to us, that's their choice.

SS: I have a raspy voice, so I imagine that the Nirvana comparisons are understandable. They were a great band, so any comparison we view as a compliment. We're both heavy bands with a pop/melodic overtone, so it's cool.

FH: It's been a long time since Nirvana was around. A lot of the kids coming to our shows have little or no direct connection with them. So maybe we're a new generation band that's picking up on some of their elements—but the fans only seem to see it as a good thing.

HP: Didn't you actually pay homage to Cobain when you played in Seattle with *Breaking Benjamin*?

SS: Yeah, we did. It was ironic that we found ourselves in Seattle on the 11th anniversary of his death, and Ben (Burnley) and I talked about doing something to commemorate it. So that morning Ben called me, and we decided on the spot to work up a version of *In Bloom* and do it on stage that night. We knew it was a gutsy thing to do in Seattle because we didn't know how the fans would react. But they went crazy from the very first note we played. They seemed to really appreciate it. It was so magical. It's one of those moments that stands out as a highlight.



Scott Stevens

TEAM SLEEP

Since the late-'90s those in-the-know fans of the Deftones have kept hearing about a mysterious, highly experimental, electronically-inclined band called Team Sleep. All most of them knew for sure was that the group was a side project of Tones vocalist Chino Moreno, and that the Team would work on musical projects only when and if time allowed. Oh yes, there was that historic (and *highly* underpublicized) 11-date West Coast tour the group undertook in 2001. And there were the occasional Team Sleep tracks that would leak out via the internet—including *Mercedes* which became an underground radio hit in 2002, and *The Passport* which popped up in 2003 as part of the **Matrix: Reloaded** soundtrack.

Despite their occasional appearances, however, for the most part Team Sleep was a band of intrigue, a unit discussed in hushed tones by only those who viewed themselves as true rock and roll “insiders.” Well, now it seems that Team Sleep is about to wake up and reveal their true musical identity to the contemporary music masses. Eleven years after Moreno and his guitar-playing buddy Todd Wilkinson began quietly passing home made, four-track tapes back and forth, their electronic dream is about to become a reality with the appearance of

“When you’re playing music that’s so different from what people expect, it allows you to approach everything else from a very fresh perspective.”

Team Sleep. Aided by programmer DJ Crook, drummer Zach Hill and bassist Rick Verrett, the Moreno/Wilkinson team is now ready to showcase their alternative musical concepts to one and all.

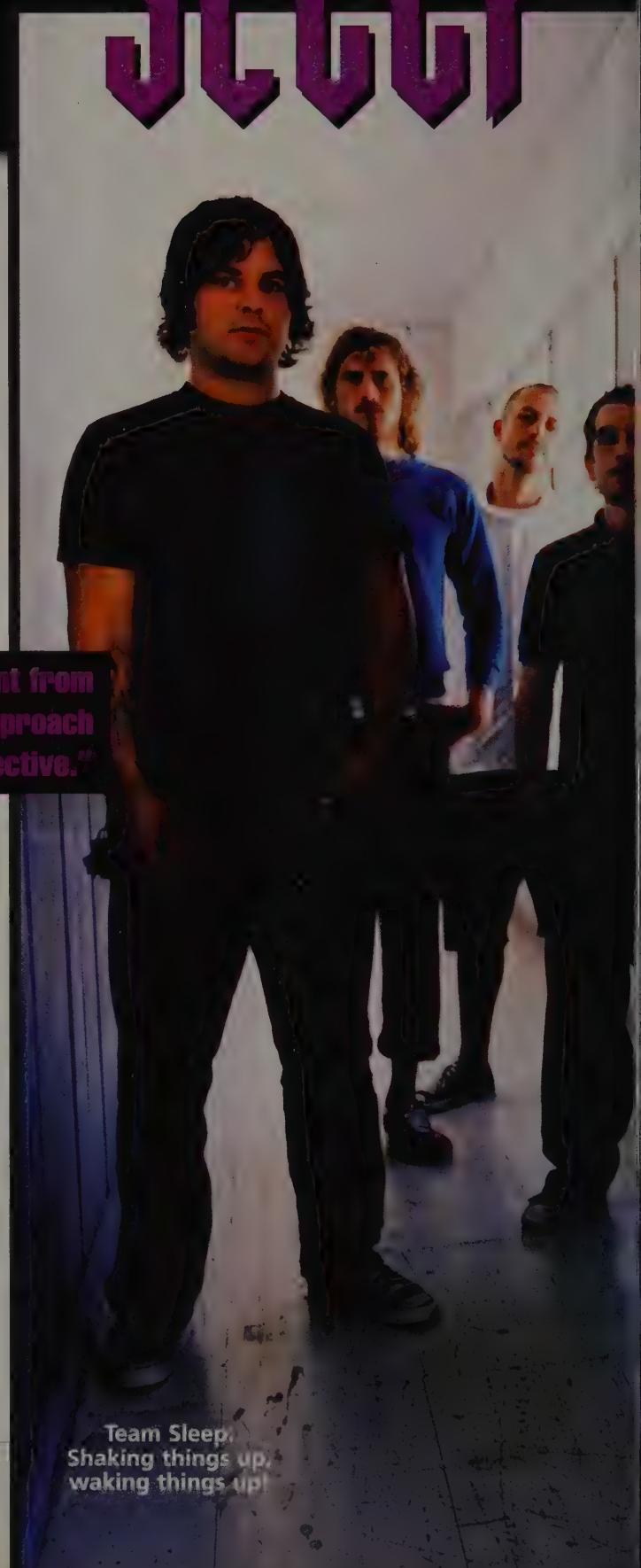
“Everybody is different, but when I have time off from making music with the Deftones I don’t want a vacation, I want to make more music,” Moreno said. “That’s at the root of Team Sleep. It’s fun to work with different people and see how they react to what you’re creating. But the best part about having this album come out is that it represents the completion of something I’ve been working on for a long time.”

A long time, indeed! It was in Sacramento way back in 1994 that Moreno and Wilkinson began their tape exchange, initially just viewing it as a fun way for two total music-heads to communicate different ideas. But soon, even as Moreno’s attentions were drawn to the heavily metallic sound of the Deftones and Wilkinson wandered off in his own career directions, the project the pair had dubbed Team Sleep began to take on a life all its own.

“The Team Sleep project has always been something totally different and apart from the Deftones,” Moreno said. “I started doing that kind of music just for fun—as something to do in my free time. But from there, it kind of took off. I did the initial recordings in my bedroom—just me fooling around with some electronic, beat-oriented samples. But once I got those tapes done, I brought in some neighborhood friends, especially Tom, to kind of round the sound out. We kept doing more work with those tapes when the time allowed because it was a lot of fun. There was no real desire to release what we were doing.”

Despite Team Sleep’s initial desires to keep their efforts more

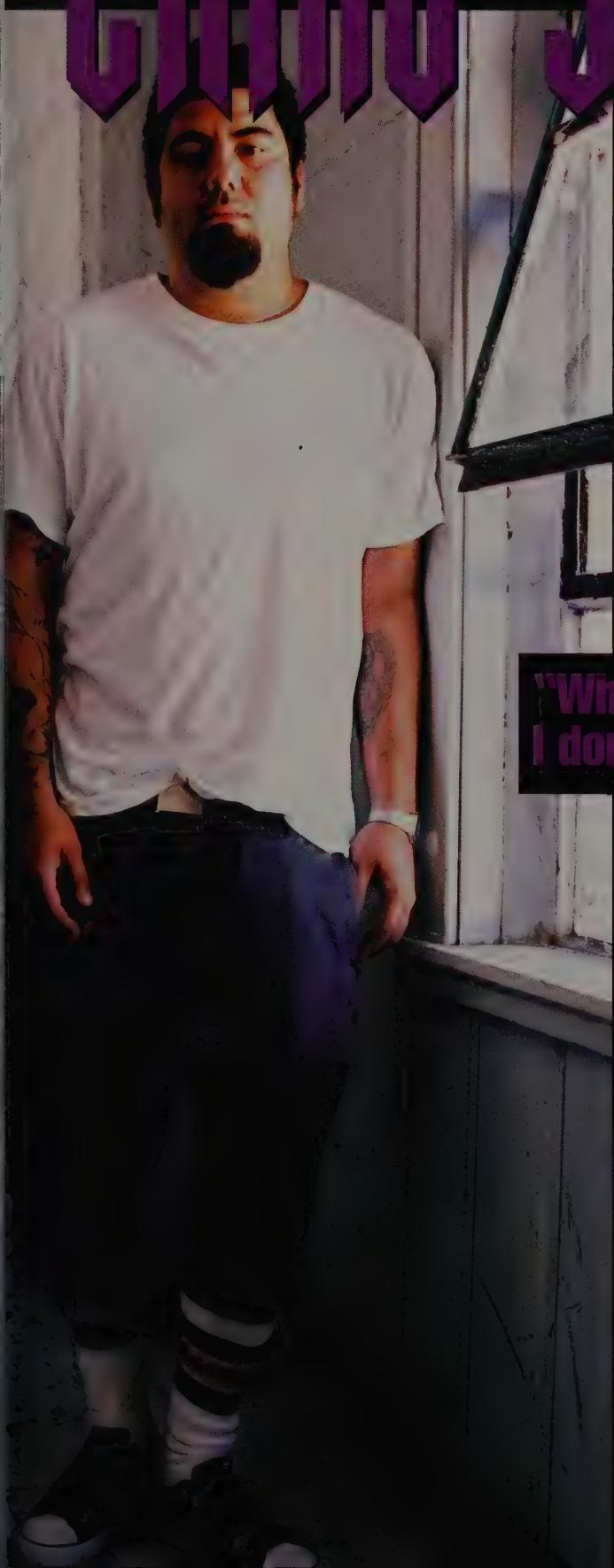
TEAM SLEEP



Team Sleep,
Shaking things up,
waking things up!

CHOO'S TWIST

BY ROY WALKER



or less to themselves, fate eventually managed to step into this unit's musical mix. Their early four-track recordings began to grow more and more sophisticated until by 2001 the Deftones' label thought Team Sleep was ready to be unleashed on the world. An early demo tape had arrived on the desk of a Maverick Records exec out in L.A. and he rightfully assumed that Deftones' fans around the globe would be fascinated to hear Moreno's side project. He was probably right, but we'll never know for sure. That's because back in 2001, much of the band's initial album was leaked on the internet months prior to its release, effectively (albeit unintentionally) sabotaging the disc's arrival.

"That was a little disappointing," Moreno said. "But once it got on the internet, and radio started to play some of the songs, we just decided to move on and create new material. We knew it would have to wait for the time between my commitments to the Deftones, but we thought it was the best decision."

The scuttling of the first Team Sleep disc only added another layer of mysterious luster to this band's legendary status. Virtually at every Deftones interview he conducted, Moreno was asked about Team Sleep. The singer admits he was amazed that so many people knew about his semi-secret endeavor, and that

**"When the Deftones have time off,
I don't want to take a vacation."**

so many people cared! It inspired him to keep pushing the project whenever his schedule allowed. And while it took all the way until the summer of 2004 for the circumstances to be right for the recording of the band's next album, Moreno now feels certain that the results were well worth the wait.

"I think some of this music has surprised a lot of fans," he said. "When you're playing music that's so different from what people expect, it allows you to approach everything else from a very fresh perspective. With the Deftones you have mosh pits and people stage diving. With Team Sleep you had none of that—just a lot of people standing there getting into the beat and occasionally tapping their foot."

Of course, as with virtually any outside project presented by a musician in a major band, questions concerning the future fate of the Deftones have already confronted Moreno from both near and far. But just as quickly as these queries are presented to the brooding vocalist, they are shot down. Fear not, Tone-heads; the Deftones will be back... and they'll be back soon—relatively speaking, of course. Before Moreno can turn his attentions back to the band in which he's made his greatest musical rep, there is a Team Sleep tour to consider, and if all goes well with that it may be early 2006 before the Tones reenter the recording studio.

"It will happen," he said. "There's no question about that. I just don't know for sure when the Deftones will start on the next album. Right now my focus is here, but I always have music on my mind... all kinds of music. I'm a big fan of just about every kind of music, so if bands are taking chances and really laying it on the line, then I applaud what they're doing and I encourage them. But, if they're just trying to fall in line and deliver what they think the people want to hear, they'd better be careful. That's not good for them, or for music."

The mere notion of legendary vocalist Paul Rodgers joining forces with the equally hallowed members of Queen has been enough to enrage just as many rock and roll "purists" as it has pleased. On one side, you have the long-time Queen fans, many of whom are downright aghast at the thought of anyone, anywhere, anyhow attempting to step into the sainted shoes of the late, great Freddie Mercury. On the other, you have the die-hard fans of former Free/Bad Company frontman Rodgers, most of whom have turned up their noses at the image of the "macho" vocalist attempting to sing some of Queen's positively prissy pop/metal anthems.

Of course, in the middle of all this commotion are millions of rock fans around the world who are tickled pink by the thought of once again having guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor

the Queen musical mantle, and then hand the reigns of the unit over to Rodgers? Apparently the thought of reigniting the too-long dormant Queen fires have been burning inside of the band's members for years. And over the ensuing period numerous rumors ran through the rock wires indicating that everyone from pop crooner George Michael to mysterious Guns N' Roses frontman Axl Rose were supposedly going to step into the Queen fold. But it wasn't until they re-recorded the song *We Are the Champions* with Brit chart king Robbie Williams (for the 2002 movie *A Knight's Tale*) that May and Taylor began to do some serious thinking about bringing Queen into the 21st Century. At first Williams seemed interested in such a project, as were the members of Queen, but things soon took a divergent course.

"Yes, I would say that's when some true consideration towards resurrecting

there. It was magic. Suddenly, everything became so obvious and so logical. We both asked Paul to join us when we were scheduled to perform at the UK Hall of Fame Awards in London, and it worked. That was the first time that we all played Queen songs in front of an audience; we performed *We Will Rock You*, *We Are the Champions* and then we finished with *All Right Now*. Right then we knew we had found what we were looking for."

Of course, as soon as these three decided to work together, they realized that there were innumerable hurdles still to be overcome. Perhaps paramount among these "problems" was simply deciding which songs to include in the band's live set. Considering the fact that all agreed that there should be a healthy sampling of Free/Bad Co. hits as part of the show, and that there were certain Queen standards that didn't work that well with Rodgers, a viable basic structure was soon constructed. The selections that made the final "cut" included Rodgers-associated tunes like *Can't Get Enough*, *Feel Like Making Love* and, of course, *All Right Now* which were placed along-side Queen classics such as *Tie Your Mother Down*, *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* and *The Show Must Go On* to create an ultimate Classic Rock hit parade.

"We chose material that we all felt comfortable with," May said. "There were certain Queen songs that weren't right for Paul and we all knew that. But so much of the material fused together so naturally and brilliantly that we all were startled. It

BY ROB ANDREWS

A Surprising Return

QUEEN

"Once we met Paul everything just seemed to click."

active again and working under the legendary Queen banner. Indeed, it's now been well over a decade since Mercury's tragic passing from an AIDS-related illness, and perhaps the time is right for one and all to once again launch this hallowed rock battleship—a band responsible for such operatic masterworks as *Bohemian Rhapsody* and rock classics as *I Want to Break Free* and *Fat Bottomed Girls*.

"Queen has always been so near and dear to my heart," May said. "But the concept of doing these songs as Queen without Freddie just didn't seem right for a very long time. We considered a variety of options over the years, but none of them sat properly with us. But once we met Paul—someone whom I've obviously admired for a very long time—things just seemed to click. He's about as different from Freddie as you can get in his stage and singing style. But he brings something to the music that is magical. The songs take on an entirely different feel, and that's what we wanted. We weren't looking for someone to mimic Freddie."

So how did all of this actually come about? What brought May and Taylor (with long-time bassist John Deacon now in retirement) to the decision that 2005 was the proper time to once again dust off

Queen began to take place," May said. "Robbie broached the subject with us while we were recording, since he was a big fan of the band's and of Freddie's. But it never worked out. It just wasn't right."

Over the next few years the idea of starting up Queen stayed warm in the hearts of both May and Taylor. But it wasn't until May and Rodgers met up at Fender guitar's anniversary show in London in September, 2004, that things really started to click. The pair performed the old Free chestnut, *All Right Now* to a delighted throng, and suddenly May envisioned what the future could hold—a partnership with Rodgers and the reemergence of Queen. He quickly got on the phone with Taylor and excitedly told him his intentions. The drummer shared May's enthusiasm.

"Brian called me up right after the Fender gig and was telling me how excited he was," Taylor said. "He wanted me to watch a tape of the performance and see if I saw the same kind of on-stage chemistry that he felt. It was obviously

makes for a great show since Paul gets to present songs that he may never have had the chance to sing before, and we get to play some of his songs that we've always loved and admired."

So how will the rock scene of 2005 react to what to many has appeared as an initially strange musical partnership? While fans raised on the likes of Slipknot and Korn will probably choose to turn a blind eye to the proceedings, fans of other reunited legends—from Judas Priest to Kiss, to Iron Maiden—will invariably look on with glee, waiting impatiently for their opportunity to witness this musical "experiment" first-hand. Of course, there is a new generation of fans—most notably fans of the Darkness, Jet and Oasis—who will be only too-anxious to experience the magic of Queen first-hand.

"We expect there to be some of our old fans at our shows," May said. "And we expect there to be some new fans, as well. This is certainly a big deal for us, and we hope it will be a big deal for them."



QUEEN

HP

FROM THE HP VAULT

Each month we bring you an incredible feature direct from the voluminous **Hit Parader** vault—an article that appeared on these hallowed pages exactly ten years ago! Without changes, editing or updates, these stories provide an amazing glimpse into this thing we call rock and roll, dealing with the form's most famous—and in some cases, infamous—stars. So direct from our Sept., 1995 issue is this "vintage" interview with the inimitable Keith Richards.

When the roll call of legendary rock guitarists is bandied about—either by fans or by other musicians—the name of the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards is bound to pop up sooner or later. Just ask Aerosmith's Joe Perry or Guns N' Roses' Slash who their main man is, and the name "Keith" instantly comes out of their mouths sounding more like a mantra than a moniker. For more than 30 years this legendary force has managed to lay down some of the most distinctive and memorable licks in rock history—from *Satisfaction* to *Honky Tonk Woman* to *Street Fighting Man* to *Paint It Black* to *Miss You* and beyond—and as proven on the Stones' latest effort, Richards hasn't lost a bit of his hard rockin' edge. Recently we caught up with the ever-cool Mr. Richards to discuss his views on contemporary rock and roll, the gear he utilizes and details of the band's latest world tour. It's all in this month's *Tech Talk*.

Hit Parader: When you go on the road, how many guitars do you take with you?

Keith Richards: It's hard for me to know off-hand, but as I run a mental check of my little road collection—the things I keep behind the amps—I'd have to guess the number is around 20. Certain guitars just sound better playing certain songs. And then I have a number of

acoustic instruments that we need. And don't forget that I like to play five string guitars as well as the more conventional six strings. They're all quite necessary. I don't line them up out there to impress anyone.

HP: Do you mostly favor the older, "classic" electric guitar models?

KR: Most of my guitars are Gibsons and Fenders, so I guess I do tend to stick with the things I've played for years. Those are the guitars I own, so they're the ones I play. But I'm certainly not against the new companies that are making some quite interesting instruments these days. One of the things that recently caught my eye was made by Music Man; they have a "Silhouette" model that I really like. Maybe if they read this they'll send me one!

HP: How about amps? Do you tend to stick to the standards there as well?

KR: Yeah, I do. I've been playing Fender Twins for years, and I'm not going to change now. I don't know how much is superstition, and how much is based on fact, but I'd be quite hesitant

to change too many things around at this point in my career. I'm just not that adventurous a soul when it comes to the things that help me make my music.

HP: Speaking of your music, people have called your new disc the best album the band has made in years. Do you agree with that?

KR: Considering that we've only made three or four albums during the last decade, that's not really saying much (laughs). The last thing we did was in 1994! But I do agree that this has many elements of our best albums. The whole atmosphere in the studio was very reminiscent of how it was when we did things like *Sticky Fingers* or *Exile On Main Street*. It was very relaxed, but very focused. I think there are songs on this new album that are as good as anything we've ever done. I'm usually quite honest about assessing an album, so when I say, this one's got it, it really does.

HP: There are 15 songs on this album—a lot more than you used to put on your records.

KR: Well, *Exile* probably had that many. But





dealing with CD formats allows you a lot more freedom than the old-style vinyl does. I don't think it was ever really a question of us having enough material to fill an album—vinyl had built-in limitations. Now, you can easily put an hour's worth of music on a single CD, how wonderful! Having 15 songs allows you to explore a lot of different musical styles. Something like *Love Is Strange* or *Sparks Will Fly* tend to be more rocking while other things have tinges of country or blues or whatever. All those elements are part of the Stones.

HP: As you plan a massive tour, like the one you're currently on, do you ever wish you could just pick up your guitar, go on stage, and forget about all the theatrics?

KR: Keep dreaming (laughs.) I know I'd love to be able to do that, but the police and the fire marshalls would probably have us arrested in ten minutes. The style of tour we've done for the last decade or so is more or less a necessity. We still sneak in a club show or two along the way just to keep things honest and stay in touch with the fans.

HP: You have bands like Stone Temple Pilots and Counting Crows opening shows for you. How in-touch do you stay with what's happening on the rock scene?

KR: Not as much as I'd like. But having the chance to have a lot of very talented young bands play with us makes me feel more in touch. I enjoy listening to what they're doing and seeing how the music is changing—and how it's staying the same. It's fun to look out and see young kids in our crowd standing right next to people as old as we are.

HP: Do you find as you get a little older, you have to work out more to stay in shape for the road?

KR: I think that holds true for Mick more than me. He has to do most of the running around. I tend to just stand in one place and play. But when you rehearse for ten hours a day, as we did before we went on the road, and you've got a heavy guitar around your neck all the time, that's enough to work off a pound or two.

HP: How is the band getting along these days?

KR: We're getting along very well, but that's not surprising. The media has always blown some of those things out of proportion. Even when we're not touring or recording we all stay in touch. We're all so close—like family. In fact, we're probably closer than a lot of families are.

HP: Do you ever stop and think about the impact the Rolling Stones have had on rock and roll?

KR: Not really. I leave that to others. I appreciate it when somebody points that out or says something nice. I never take it for granted. But my interest is making new music, not living on past accomplishments.

LYRICALLY SPEAKING

the story behind
the song

BY RENEE DAIGLE

BREAKING POINT *A BEAUTIFUL DISORDER*

The Memphis-based Wind-Up recording artists Breaking Point are currently on tour promoting their emotionally charged album *Beautiful Disorder*, and, of course their first single, *Show Me A Sign*, which is currently blazing up the music charts.

So, with this in mind, **Lyrical Speaking** sat down with guitarist and songwriter Justin Rimer to talk about his band's second release, songwriting advice, and, of course the story behind the heart-felt lyrics to *Show Me A Sign*.

"*Show Me A Sign* is a song both Brett (Erickson; vocals/guitars) and I wrote. Basically, we came up with the verse first, and, the chorus made itself apparent as we were writing the song, lyrically," discloses Justin.

He adds, "The song is about hope, basically a situation in which you have no control over the outcome. It's really a cry and a plea for help. We, as a band, really did some soul searching when we were writing this record. You know, we were really experimenting with different sounds and emotions and not really having a planned outcome. We were just letting it all out. We wrote over 90 songs for this record. You know, just expressing our emotions laying them on the line, really. *Show Me A Sign* really relates to many different situations in my life. Whether you're searching for faith. Searching for closure, or searching for the truth, or uncovering lies, you're looking for the next sign to go on. It's really a plea for someone or something to be honest, and not cover up the truth in the matter. It's a song about being fed up!"

Do you have a hard time crafting a story into lyrical form, Justin? "No, not really that's where we were as a band. Our first record was out in 2001 and just where we were as a band, we were searching for our next step, musically and personally. It just really was as a band."

When crafting a song, do you write with a specific format in mind? "No, no... not at all! I think that's what we really pride ourselves on. Being a diverse band and not really having a formula or 'this is the way we sound, blah, blah, blah.' I mean, we let it come out whether it's a slow song, heavy song, or fast, you know, we never really try and 'this is how we have to sound' a lot of times I'll sit at home and bring it in and we collaborate. Brett's the same way. There's



THIS MONTH'S SOUNDTRACK SPOTLIGHT: FANTASTIC 4: THE ALBUM

The heat is on, and, if you're looking to your friends at Hit Parader to cool things off for you during this awfully hot season—you're sadly mistaken!

As you know, this summer's blockbuster movie, the *Fantastic 4* is not only a heart-pounding thrill—it also has an impressive on soundtrack to boot! **Wind-Up Records** takes credit for assembling this hot roster of talent, which ranges in taste from *Velvet Revolver's* *Come On, Come In* to *Breaking Point's* *Goodbye To You*.

A special surprise is newcomer Wind-Up recording artist, Megan McCauley. You first fell in love with her lyrics on the *Electra* soundtrack—now she's back and better than ever with her track *Reverie*—which is nothing short of a masterpiece!

Stay tuned to Hit Parader to learn more about this up-and-coming superstar we know and love as Megan McCauley. For more information about the *Fantastic Four* Soundtrack, please click onto: www.fantasticoursoundtrack.com



PHOTO: COURTESY OF WIND-UP RECORDS



the latest information about Justin and the boys, please click onto:

www.breakingpoint.com

no set formula. This is a very emotional record. It really all came out of true honest feelings. There's no set formula except for emotions," reveals Justin.

When constructing a song, do you have a secret on making the words sound right? "For me, personally, I'll come up with the melody, and, I'll have the melody in my head and yeah constructing the right words is the biggest key and formatting the words to fit the melody and it's a really hard process, but it takes a while sometimes it doesn't pop right out, and sometimes it does. This one was pretty evident, but you know, for me, I always have a melody sometimes I'll start a song with a melody, or I'll be playing on the guitar and I'll come up with some chords and all of a sudden this melody will pop in my head, and yeah, fitting the words into the melody is the hardest part. I don't know how other people write songs, but that's how I do it. It is very hard. There's certain amount of syllables in the melody and you need to make these words flow with it. It's a tough process, but I love it!"

Justin, you know, songwriting can be a real roller coaster ride, what advice would you give to our readers on surviving the ride? "I think just staying true to yourself and what you feel and not really trying to 'like this is the way I got to sound, or our band needs to sound,' or 'this song has to sound like that song.' I say go off your truest emotions, I mean that's what takes you for a ride on a song. I mean, not try to cater to one particular style or this is how this has to be. That's how songs come out of, your feelings, and you just ride with your feelings, you know, I think it will take you where you need to go."

Do you have a songwriting process, and if so, what does it entail? "I always have a tape recorder with me—it sits by my bed when I go to sleep at night, a lot of times, I'll wake up in the middle of the night, and, if you don't get it within '30 seconds' you lose it. That's why I have a tape recorder by my bed, on my computer, I have a little program I can bring it right up, I am also the 'king' of calling myself and leaving messages or singing songs—whether it being a riff or a lyric or a melody—that's how I do it. They come and go so fast, and if you don't record them, I think you're going to lose it! When we are in Memphis, I'll go down to the river I'll write and we have our little studio, I'm in there

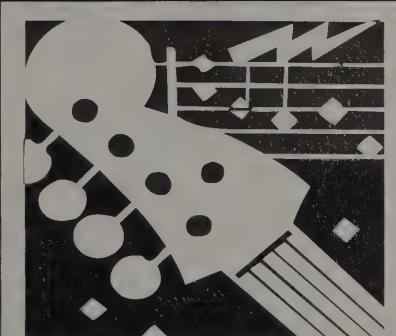
12 hours a day. I don't know, you don't know when it's

going to come out. The whole key to songs or melodies, you just never know when 'it's' going to happen. Biggest thing for me is to have some source to record it and get it down, or you're going to lose it," recalls Justin.

On a personal note: "I would like to encourage everyone to check out *Beautiful Disorder*. I think it has a lot to offer. I think a lot of people will be able to relate to this. It's very, very personal—emotional songs! I think people will relate and find it therapeutic."

For the latest information about Justin and the boys, please click onto:

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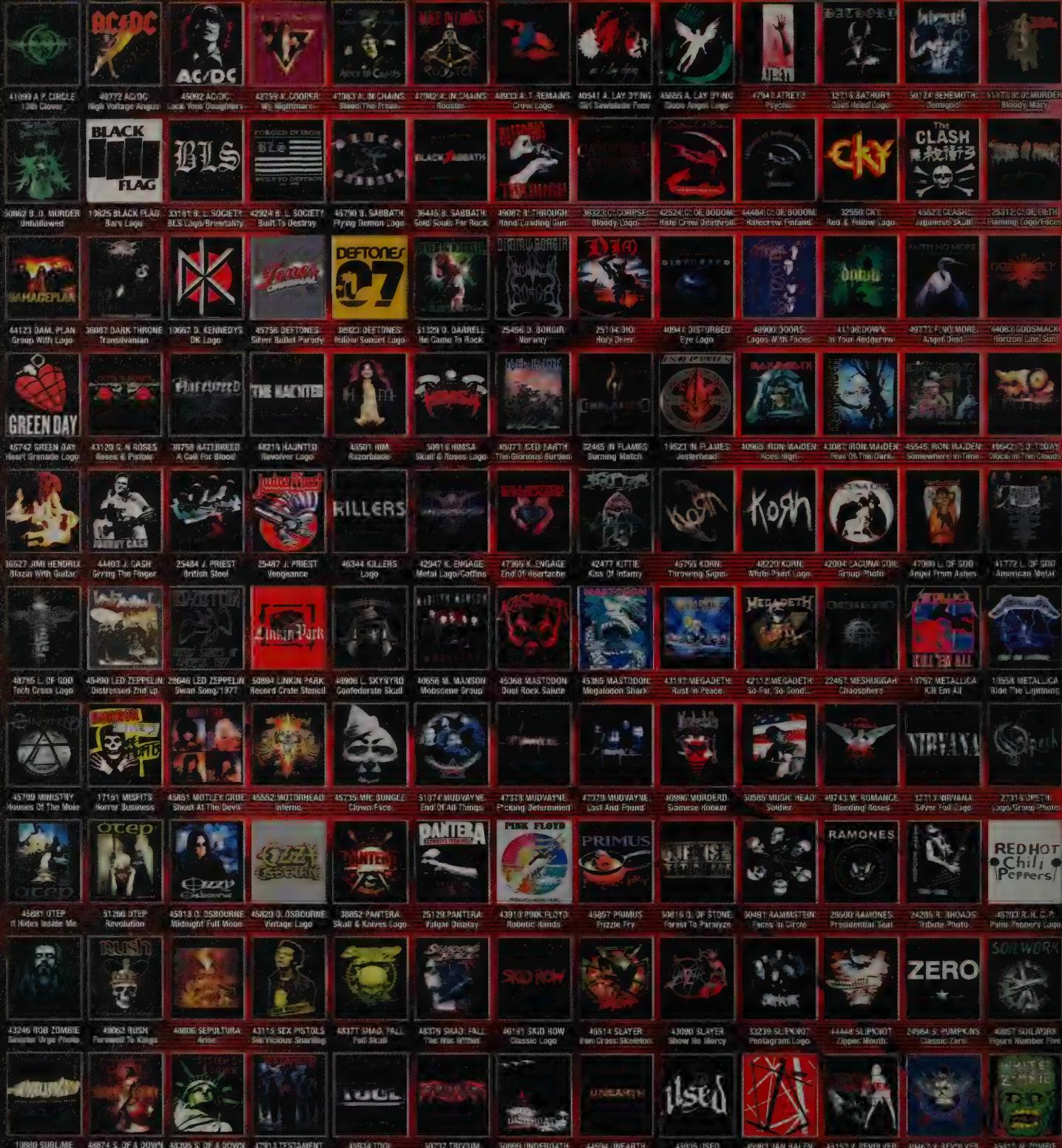
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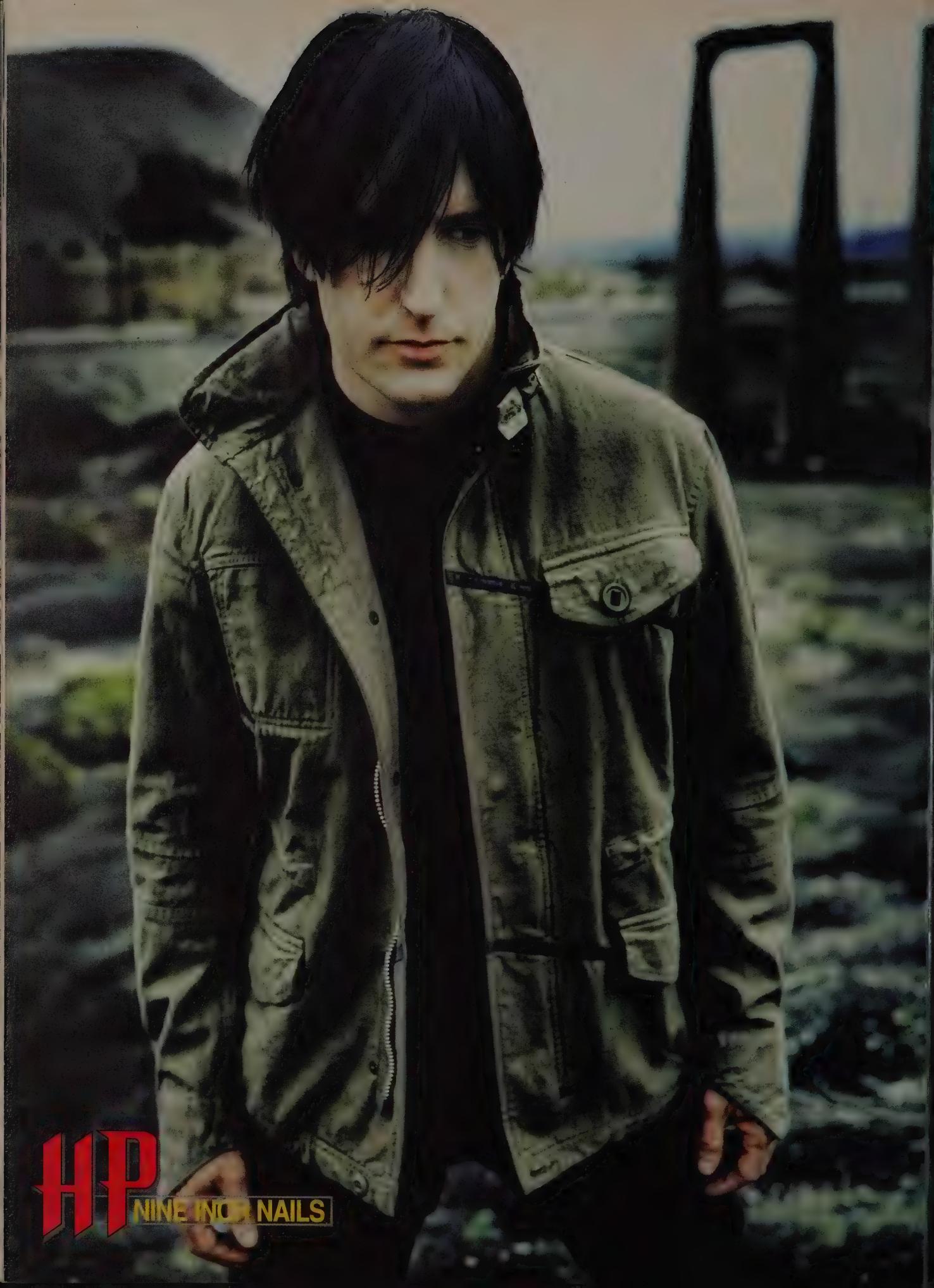
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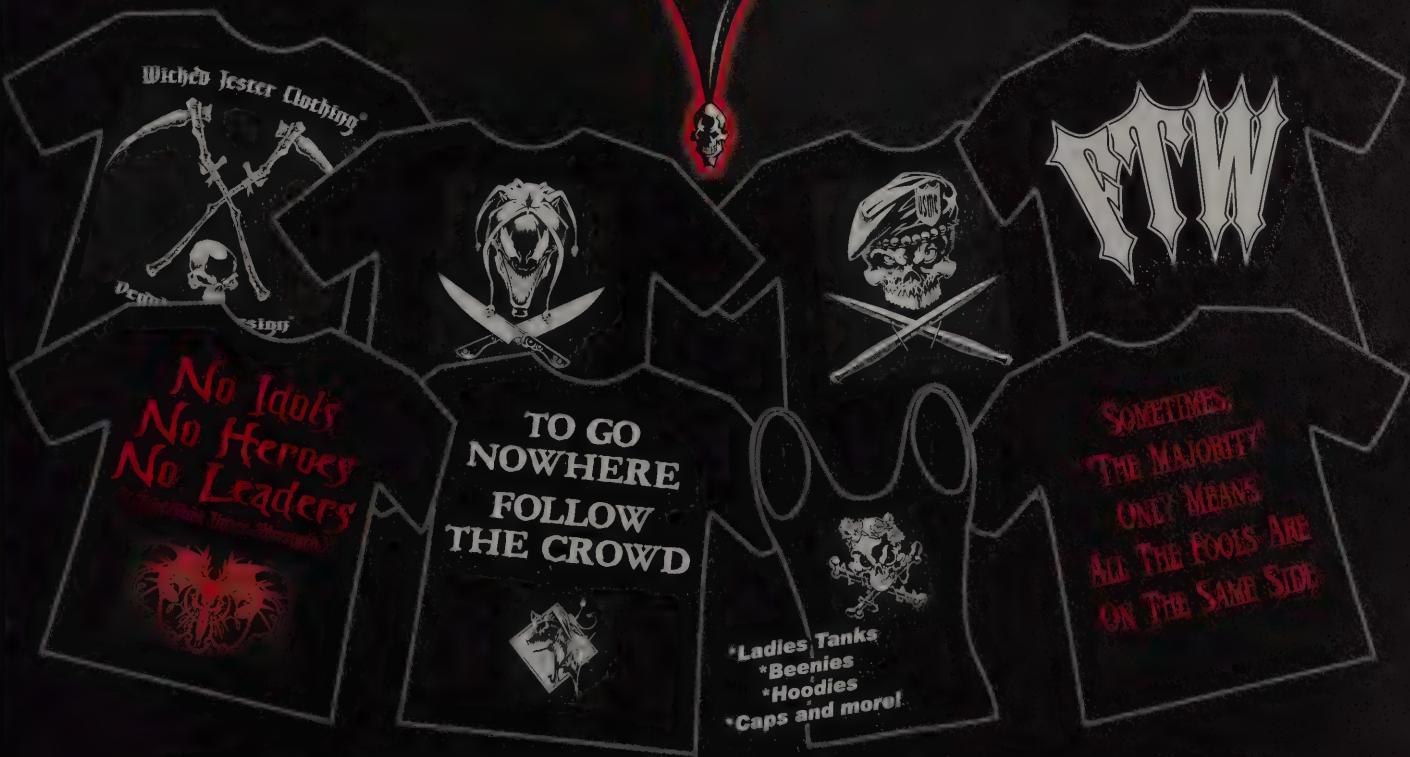


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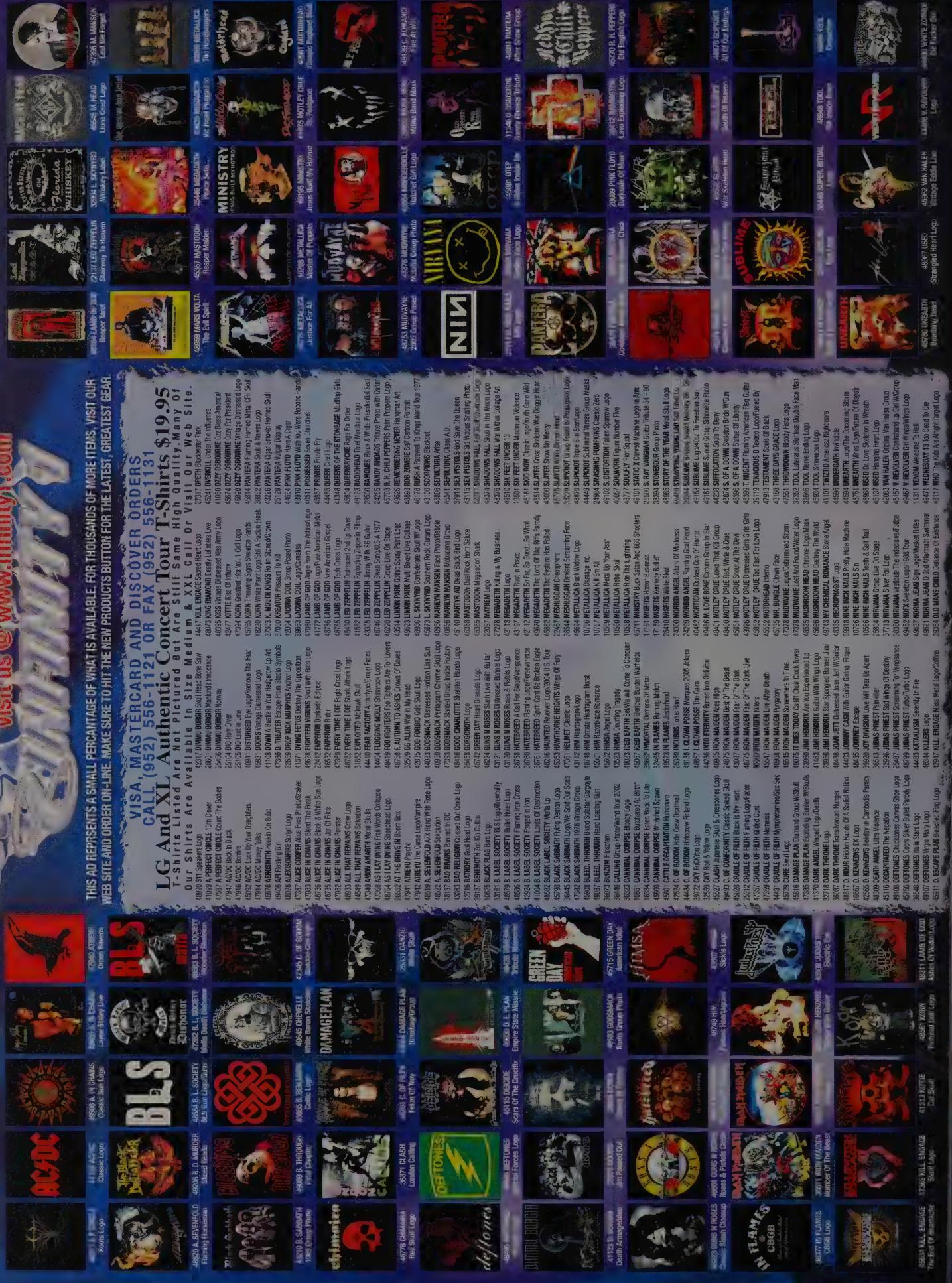
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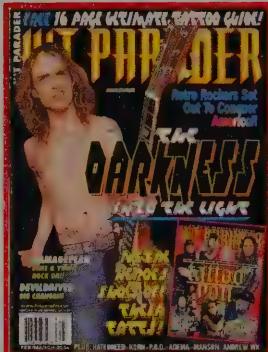
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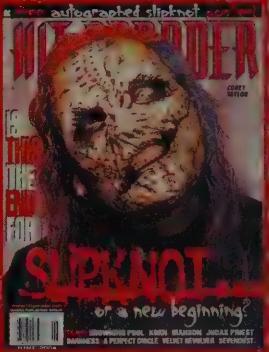
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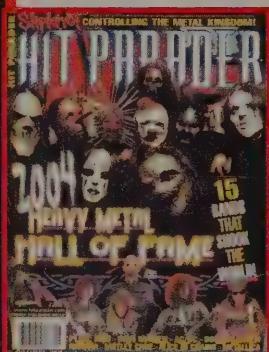
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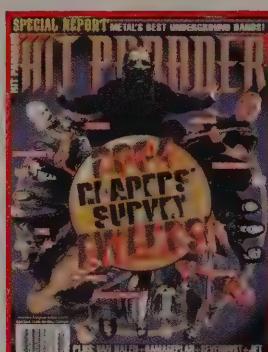
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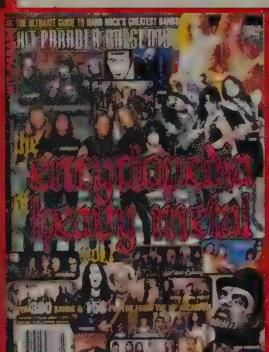
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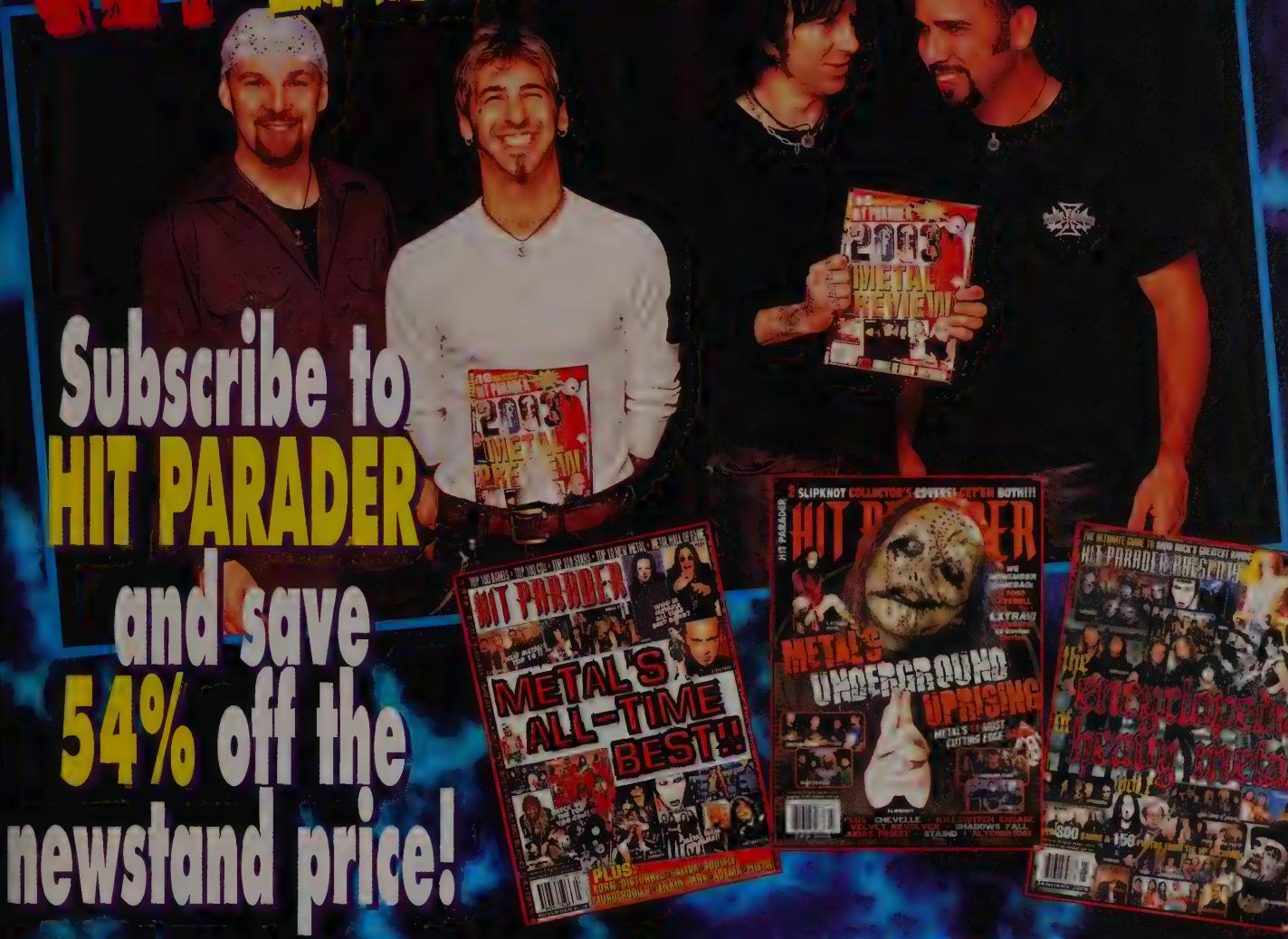
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McFarlane packaged this guitar icon using his trademark top hat and omnipresent cigarette. This action figure also features Slash wearing his leather jacket while playing guitar.

For more information about **Slash**, please visit the **McFarlane** web sit at www.McFarlane.com.



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WICKED FAIRY TALES

The now famous **McFarlane Monsters Twisted Fairy Tales** action figure line in Series 4, which focuses on the beloved fairy tale and nursery rhyme characters; **Red Riding Hood**, **Little Miss Muffet**, **Gretel**, **Hansel**, **Peter Pumpkin Eater**, and **Humpty Dumpty**, who all now resemble McFarlane's twisted style!

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Hansel: Gretel's brother is somewhat blind, because he's trapped and waiting for the evil witch to fatten him up!

Peter Pumpkin Eater: Peter has definitely lost his cool. His wife is now resting "peacefully!"

Humpty Dumpty: Who fell off the wall was shock enough; however, Humpty is now in a real world of hurt!

For more information about **McFarlane Monsters Twisted Fairy Tales** series, please visit them on the web at www.Spawn.com.



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GUITAR RIGS

The **Guitar Rigs Classic Guitar & Amp Combinations** (Backbeat Books) was penned by Dave Hunter. This informative book offers the reader an honest assessment of the classic combinations of guitar and amp, while celebrating the quest for the perfect (guitar) sound!

The book features a priceless collection of great instruments and amplifiers presented in full color, as well as a CD, which demonstrates the sounds of a wide variety of guitar and amp combinations.

For more information about the **Guitar Rigs Classic Guitar & Amp Combinations**, please visit www.backbeatbooks.com.

POP CULTURE BOOK

From **Abba to Zoom A Pop Culture Encyclopedia of the Late 20th Century** (Andrews McMeel Publishing) is a pop culture encyclopedia written by David Mansour.

Mansour, who is a true pop culture curator and collector, jam-packed this book with over 3,000 entries, which arrange alphabetically (literally from Abba to Zoom!) for easy reference for the pop

culture enthusiast!

To learn more about this fascinating book, please visit your local bookstore.

BATMAN BEGINS

In conjunction with the Warner Bros. movie **Batman Begins**, Electronic Arts welcomes the gamer into the shadows of Gotham City via their Playstation 2 console.

The gamer will play as both Bruce Wayne and his alter ego, Batman as they hunt for evildoers from the shadows, using strength, intellect and an array of high tech gadgets to fight the sinister forces that threaten the city, including classic villains Scarecrow, Ra's Al Ghul, and Carmine Falcone.

While playing as Batman, you will fight crime by stalking criminals from the shadows, as well as discover new and exciting ways to paralyze the thugs with fear before engaging in hand-to-hand combat, or interrogating them with this game's new key feature: *Cinematic Combat*.

From the halls of Wayne Manor to the ancient monastery high in the Himalayas, this video game is a must play, if your dream is to live the life of Christopher Nolan's Dark Knight in **Batman Begins**.

For more information about **Batman Begins**, please visit the Electronic Arts web site at www.ea.com.

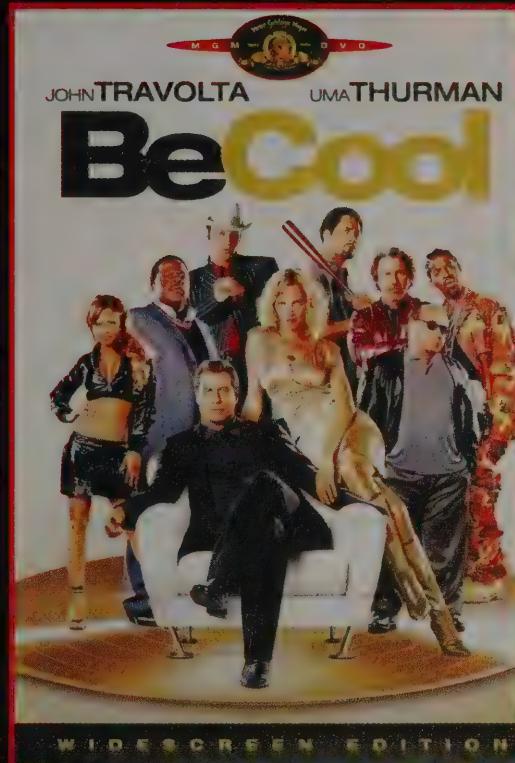
DVD REVIEWS.....

BE COOL

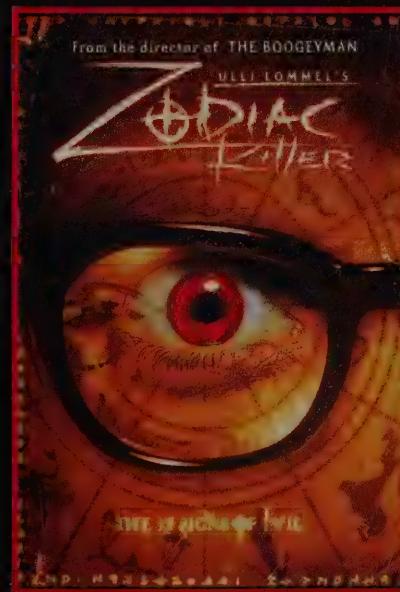
Be Cool (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Home Entertainment) is a wildly hilarious tale about a gangster-turned-music mogul and what it takes to be number one with a bullet!

When Chili Palmer (John Travolta) decides to try his hand in the music industry, he romances the sultry widow (Uma Thurman) of a recently whacked music executive, who both approaches a hot young singer (Christina Milian) from a rival manager and discovers that the record industry is packin' a whole lot more than a tune!

This two-hour movie also features the making-of documentary, plus deleted scenes, gag reel, as well as the music video with The Rock as Elliot Wilhelm performing *You Ain't Woman Enough to Take My Man*, as well as much more!



WIDESCREEN EDITION



ZODIAC KILLER

The **Zodiac Killer** (Lions Gate Home Entertainment) is directed by Ulli Lommel (*Boogeyman*), and is a terrifying thriller, which stars Michael Cosner, a 19-year-old, living in Los Angeles is driven by an obsession and madness to recreate the murders of the Zodiac Killer.

However, forensic psychologist David Hess is determined to track and stop his every move. The question is: will he be able to prevent more killings from this copycat killer, or is it too late?

To find out the answer, you must rent this horror flick!

PREMONITION

Premonition (Lions Gate Entertainment)

is the second title from the six-part film anthology. This Japanese horror sensation focuses on a character named Hideki and his inexplicable power to foresee the future. He can see everything from slayings to train crashes, yet he can do nothing to stop these events... or can he?

When a newspaper predicts that his daughter will die in a car accident, he starts searching for a way to change her inevitable fate.

Premonition, directed by Norio Tsuruta (*Sky High* and *Kakashi*), won the Official Selection at the Tribeca Film Festival, which is currently available on your local video store shelves.



TECH TALK WITH HIT PARADER

ANTHRAX

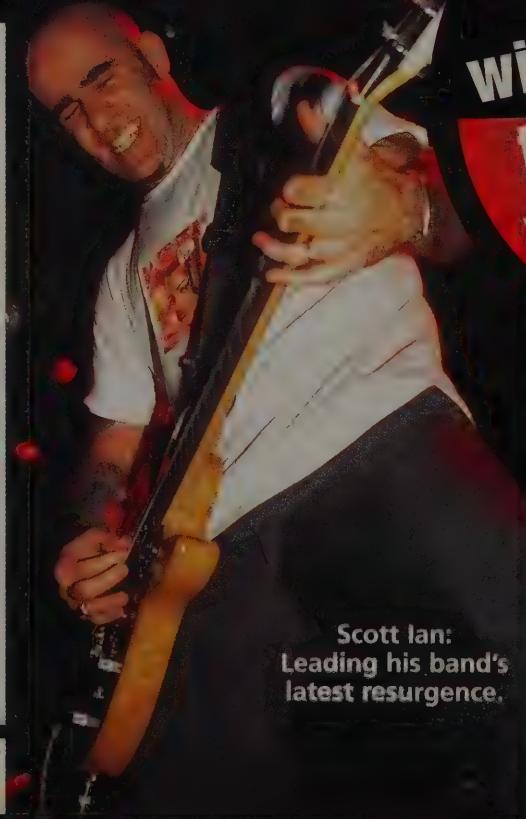
BY AMY SCIARRETTO

No one ever thought that Anthrax would be welcoming singer Joey Belladonna, guitarist Dan Spitz, and bassist Frankie Bello back into the fold in 2005. After all, Belladonna's replacement, the capable John Bush, had taken the frontman role and made it his own. In fact, by now Bush has been in Anthrax longer than Belladonna. But to celebrate their 20th anniversary, the Anthrax crew have decided to once again spread the disease, and have welcomed their former members back for a tour. Everything else is up in the air, though. When *Hit Parader* spoke to Anthrax guitarist and heavy metal scene presence Scott Ian about the reunion, he made it clear that the future was uncertain, and that other than rehearsing and touring, the future with this line up is a very tenuous thing. Will there be an album of new material? Ian and Anthrax don't know right now. Is John Bush still the singer of Anthrax? Yes, for now. So much is up in the air, and it lends an element of mystery to Anthrax. But one thing's for sure. Whatever happens, Ian and his crew will make certain it's an interesting, adventurous ride. For fans of classic 'Thrax platters like *Fistful Of Metal*, *Persistence Of Time*, and *Among The Living*, this reunion is the wettest of dreams. The only thing certain at press time is that the band will tour the U.S. this Fall. Read on for the scoop right from the horse's mouth...

Hit Parader: Who made this happen? I mean, *The Greater Of Two Evils*, with John Bush re-recording the vocals on Belladonna tracks, came out, and just when we're fully used to John Bush, we get the switcheroo. Where you inspired by Judas Priest linking up again? No, it was nothing at all like that. We didn't look at Judas Priest's reunion and say 'Let's do this!' It was a spur of the moment idea and we thought we had to do it now. This is our window and we might jump out of it.

HP: But why now? Obviously, you're not getting any younger. What was the catalyst that sparked this reunion?

This year is the 20th anniversary of the release of our first album. We tried to think of ways to celebrate that. We wanted to put together a box set, but it would take years to assemble something like that, and



Scott Ian:
Leading his band's
latest resurgence.

we'd probably put it out by the band's 25th anniversary. We were on tour in Europe and [drummer] Charlie [Benante] asked me about my thoughts on doing a reunion. That was the spark, and the more I talked about it, the more I thought, 'Now is the time.' Why not? If we wait for another anniversary, what if we can't do it at that time? What if we physically can't do it, because we're too old? There's no reason to wait. We didn't have to twist anybody's arms or do any convincing of ex-members. That's the only way it could happen. So no one had a problem with coming back. If they did have a real problem with coming back, then why do it at all? We called John Bush first, because he is the signer of Anthrax, to tell him about it. We were going to have both of them come out and do the tour. But he graciously pulled himself out of the mix, and said, 'Go do this.' Then, we contacted Frankie, Joey, and Danny, and then it went down.

HP: How does it feel to be in a room with all those guys again? We're excited. We spent a week in New York doing press and hanging out and it was comfortable, organic and it didn't feel weird. Once we were all in a room and spending time together, the vibe was easy.

HP: Did you remain in contact with Danny and Joey over the years since they left the band? I hadn't spoken to Dan in 10 years, and I hadn't seen Joey in five years.

HP: You said a few minutes ago that John Bush is the singer of Anthrax. So, he's still the singer, and this is just a one-off thing? Or no? Of course he is still the singer. No one has been fired. John has been a part of the family for years. I can't tell you if we're making a record with Joey because I

"This is our window to make this happen—we jumped out of it."

don't know. We don't know anything that we're doing. We have tours lined up. We don't know what we're going to do. We can't say what's going to happen, because we just don't know. I wish I could be that confident and say we're going to record a record but I have no idea. Are we capable of that? We haven't even rehearsed yet. We have to



"Classic" Anthrax, 2005.

get to that stage first and go from there.

HP: So, there was no awkwardness when you guys finally got together again? If we got into a room and there was weirdness or it seemed uncomfortable, then we'd know we can't take it any further. I can't live on tour for the next year in those conditions. If I had that vibe, I would have said, 'I can't do this.' But we can pull this off and make it great. And people will get to see something they'd never get to see. People might have been too young the first time around to see this lineup or they never thought they'd get to see it again. It's great for everyone.

HP: Will you play songs from the post-Belladonna era? No, we'll be playing songs strictly from Fistful to Persistence Of Time.

HP: Are you going to play stuff you haven't played in a long time? Some songs, we've played them forever but we could not just go out and play only those same songs just because Joey's back. We also want other songs that we've not played since 1986 or 1987, that no one has seen us play.

It'll be fun to see how they go over, since some people might not recognize them.

HP: For the neophytes, can you sum up in one sentence or two sentences why Belladonna left the band? In early 1992, we made the decision to move on without him. We could not continue with him. It was a crappy decision, and I wished I could still play with the same four guys I started the band with in 1981. But sometimes, you have to move forward and make decisions that are hard or else it would be the end of the band. Everything we do ensures the future of Anthrax, and that decision was one of them.

HP: Can you sum up your emotions about this whole reunion thang?

I feel great. I don't have to do this. It's never been a 'have to.' I do what I want to do. I do it because I love it, and I enjoy making records and touring and am privileged to do this. It's not some eight-year thing, and then we're gone. It's my job and it's the best job in the world. The fans enabled me to do this for my whole life. It's a privilege. I am excited about this. It's another chapter in the history of the band.

INSTRUMENTALLY SPEAKING

BY MICHAEL SHORE



DRUM WORKSHOP

Drum Workshop, as we've noted many times in this space, makes some of the highest-quality, most beautiful, drums on the planet. Given their state-of-the-art nature, they're high-priced, too. BUT—as we've also noted many times—DW also has a "budget" drum line which it introduced a few years ago, Pacific Drums & Percussion. Maybe this was a yin-yang balancing act, but the fact of the matter is, with PDP DW has covered both ends of the market and for drummers that it better than A-Okay, because DW somehow manages to bring that same ultra-quality consciousness and innovation to the more-affordable PDP line...and it keeps coming out with intriguing and worthwhile new products and models at both ends of the spectrum. And by the way, the PDP range itself is extensive and high-reaching enough that the drums are used and endorsed by such pros as Drowning Pool's Mike Luce, Brain of Guns N' Roses, and Joey Castillo of Queens of the Stone Age.

We've already told you, in recent issues, about PDP's FXR and FS kits, with shells made of bright, dry-sounding birch instead of the traditional maple...and the unique, forward-looking B.O.A. bass drum pedal. But that was only scratching the surface of PDP's latest offerings. Let's begin this month with snare drums: among the coolest are the "Blackout" snares in PDP's 805 Series, with maple/mahogany shells and sharp black finishes plus black powder-coated hardware that give them the "Blackout" name; they're available in 14" X 5" and 13" X 4" sizes. Meanwhile, along with a wide variety of natural-finish all-maple snares that are probably more suited to jazz drummers, PDP also has a new phosphorous-brass snare with a gorgeous, hand-hammered shell in the classic 14" X 5.5" size, and fully possessed of the combination of richness and ringing projection unique to brass.

In a future issue we'll tell you about PDP's absolutely eye-popping auxiliary piccolo snares in a stunning rainbow of finish-and-hardware color combos. But for now, speaking of looks, we'll just add that PDP's terrific MX Series line of maple-shelled kits now come in two very snazzy new high-end

fade finishes, Emerald and Tobacco. Much in the manner of DW's spectacular Collector's Series Satin Oil finishes, the PDP fades are applied in a two-part process, where the fade effect comes with a second coat added after the base coat. All MX Series kits come in F.A.S.T.-sized 5-piece configurations, with 8" X 10", 9" X 12" and 11" X 14" toms, 18" X 22" bass drums, and 5" X 14" matching wood snares, S.T.M suspension tom mounts, True-Pitch Tuning systems, and Pacific's signature oval lugs;



(*Duets Volume One* was made by DW's Video wing originally on VHS tape, now reissued on DVD too, with bonus Bozzio concert footage).

Both of these greats play original music composed specifically for drumset, but this is more than a full-length performance video with multiple camera angles and digital 5.1 surround sound—with Bozzio and Wackerman each explaining their approaches and analyzing their performances and practice routines, there's plenty of educational/instructional value for the \$39.95 retail price.

For more on all these DW and PDP products, to study available finishes, and check out their other offerings, visit www.dwdrums.com and www.pacificdrums.com online.



A GUIDE TO THE LATEST GEAR



HIWATT BULLDOG BASS 20 & 30 AMPS

Hiwatt, one of the legendary names in British amplifiers, is back, in a wide range of models that bring classic designs up to date with the latest technology, ranging from high-end tube amps, some based on designs favored or commissioned by guitar gods like The Who's Pete Townshend and Pink Floyd's David Gilmour. But there are also more affordable solid-state models, like the Bulldog Series based on the popular compact combo amp of the same name. There are 10, 20 and 30 watt Bulldog guitar amps and 20 and 30 watt bass amps, plus a top-of-the-line Custom 50 watt combo (with specially designed Fane speaker and 18 marine ply cabinet). The Bulldog 20 bass, for instance, has 3-band EQ, 6" speaker, headphone jack and CD/tape input; the Bulldog 30 guitar amp has 2 channels with separate Master Volume, hi/lo

impedance inputs, 3-band EQ, 10" speaker, reverb, headphone jack and CCD/tape input, plus optional footswitch.

For more info on these and the many more available Hiwatt amps head online to www.hiwatt.com.



DUNCAN BASS SOAPBAR PICKUP

Basslines, the all-bass division of custom-replacement pickup biggie Seymour Duncan, is getting all passive-aggressive with its new Phase II Soapbar pickups. That is, it's a traditional passive-electronic pickup that's still compatible with active-electronics as well as passive tone controls, for those who just prefer the classic, organic sound and don't like battery-powered active pickups. It's a direct replacement for soapbar-style pickups, usually requiring no additional modification or routing to install. It has the warmth and punch of great passive pickups, and for those who'd like the best of both worlds, active-style tone control is still possible with the Basslines STC-2p or 3p Tone Circuits, offering two or three bands of active EQ plus a proprietary "slap contour" switch. For more info check out www.seymourduncan.com online.



PLANET WAVES SUREPICK

Guitarists—get a grip! Literally: Planet Waves' new

Surepick has a soft, textured rubber grip molded onto both sides, not just a raised surface design. So it's less prone to slip, change positions, or be dropped, and more comfortable to boot, while retaining the playing and sound characteristics of a "normal" pick. Surepicks are available in three color-coded gauges, thin, medium and heavy. For more info, see www.planet-waves.com online.



INSTRUMENTALLY SPEAKING

DRUM BEAT



Vater

If you're looking to add some color and sparkle to your playing as you strike those cymbals (and drums), you could do a lot worse than check out Vater's new Color Wrap sticks. These are Vater's very popular 5A, 5B and Power 5B wood tip models wrapped with eye-catching high-density finishes—Blue Sparkle, Gold Sparkle, Red Sparkle, Black Optic, Silver Optic and Purple Optic - which don't compromise the feel and balance of the stick. All list for \$13.95 per pair. For more on these and Vater's many other sticks, mallets, and related items, go online to www.vater.com.



Zildjian

How'd you like to not only meet Velvet Revolver (and former G 'N R among others) drummer Matt Sorum at the worldwide headquarters of cymbal giant Zildjian, but also win your own hand-picked complete Zildjian cymbal set-up, PLUS thousands of dollars in other prizes? Well, now you can try, at least, by entering the A. Zildjian 2005 Matt Sorum Sweepstakes. Yes, the world's oldest and most respected cymbal-maker is offering more than \$25,000 retail value in total prizes, including the complete cymbal-selection, plus the chance to meet Matt, to three lucky winners. The contest began Aug. 1 but fear not, it's open through Jan. 15, 2006. For info on entering, check your local Zildjian dealer, or visit www.zildjian.com online, where you can also learn about the wide, wide, wide world of Zildjian's cymbals, sticks and more.

Zildjian



Yamaha

Finally, Yamaha's taken the next step in electronic drumkits with its DTXplorer, an 8-piece system with 5 single-zone pads including one for hi-hat, a kick pad and two single-zone cymbal pads, plus a DTXPL Trigger Module and rack system, kick pedal and hi-hat pedal controller all included. The Trigger Module has no less than 192 drum voices between all its kick, snare, tom, cymbal, hi-hat, percussion and effect patches, plus 32 preset drum kits and 22 preset songs; for all that, its eight buttons, jog dial and color-coding make it simple to use, and its terminals are compatible with optional 2- or 3-zone pads and externally triggered acoustic drums, too! You can also plug in a CD, MP3 or other external audio source to play along with your favorite tunes, and the built-in high-performance metronome lets you customize up to 30 click patterns with actual drum voices assignable to five different click values. For more on this and Yamaha's other electronic and acoustic drums, visit www.yamaha.com online.

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